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Strategies to Create Equity-Focused Psychologically Safe Climates

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Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) examines strategies to create equity-focused psychologically safe climates within post-secondary institutions. Organizational environments that are marked by high stress, professional hierarchies, and pressure to provide high-quality service, such as those within post-secondary institutions, benefit the most from strategic psychological safety interventions. Yet, many organizations are unsuccessful in creating psychologically safe environments because they have not applied an equity lens (Foley et al., 2002; Singh et al., 2013). A one-size-fits-all approach to psychological safety often exacerbates systemic inequities and barriers which have disproportionate negative impacts on marginalized students and employees (Singh et al., 2013). This OIP aims to apply an equity lens to psychological safety and deconstruct ways of advancing equity-focused psychological safety via leadership development. An inclusive leadership lens is used to identify possible solutions to the problem, framing equity and psychological safety as a core leadership function in pursuit of social justice. Kotter's Eight Step Change Model and Bridges' Transition Model are used to frame change implementation and change activities. Gaventa's (2006) power cube framework is used to explore, understand, and position how spaces for engagement and communication are impacted by power.

Keywords: inclusive leadership, psychological safety, equity, equity-informed, marginalization, power, transition model

Executive Summary

Psychological safety is particularly important in environments and organizational contexts that are marked by uncertainty, ambiguity, high-stakes accountability, professional hierarchies, and consumer demand to produce and provide high-quality service (Edmondson et al., 2016). Psychological safety, an antecedent to feelings of belongingness, trust, vulnerability, creativity, and innovation, has become increasingly recognized as the hallmark of top tier organizations (Edmondson et al., 2016). Organizational cultures and environments where pressure, anxiety, uncertainty, and prestige are common-place, including post-secondary institutions, benefit the most from strategic psychological safety interventions to support and mitigate the negative effects among individuals and teams working in high-stress and interdependent settings, including lower employee engagement, lower levels of interpersonal trust, and poorer operational outcomes (Edmondson et al., 2016; Schein & Bennis, 1965). Many organizations that attempt to create greater psychological safety and inclusion are unsuccessful because they have not applied an equity lens to initiatives aimed at creating psychologically safe environments (Foley et al., 2002; Singh et al., 2013; Singh & Winkel, 2012). Singh et al. (2013) caution that psychological safety is not a one size fits all. Rather, differences in identity, including racial, gender, ethnic, cultural, disability, and sexual identities, contribute to different experiences and perceptions of what is considered psychologically safe and is influenced by the context of the organization (Singh et al., 2013). The problem of practice presented within this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the lack of an institutional approach to creating equity-focused and psychologically safe climates at a multi-site post-secondary institution in Ontario.

Chapter 1 describes the context and environment of the organization, known as XX College, including a brief history, approaches to change, and an exploration of the current state. The current state reflects a commitment and shared desire to create greater psychological safety, equity, and inclusion, though little action has taken place since the release of the strategic plan in 2019. The ideal future state of XX College is one where administrators, staff, faculty, and students experience equity-focused psychologically safe climates within their work and learning spaces. All members of the XX College community should feel they can bring their whole selves to work/school without fear of negative consequences or reprisal for being themselves (Soares & Lopes, 2020). Inclusive leadership provides a critical lens on how the problem of practice may be framed. A clear change gap was identified by examining the current state of XX College and using critical race theory and queer theory to frame the problem. Finally, XX College's change readiness was analyzed using Lehman et al.'s (2002) organizational change readiness framework, supported by Vakola's (2013) conceptual approach to overlay change readiness at micro, meso, and macro levels.

Chapter 2 explores inclusive leadership as a leadership approach to change. Inclusive leadership and the relationship to organizational change presents a new intersection within leadership theory and discourse. This chapter positions and explores the ways in which inclusive leadership practice may inform change processes. Kotter's (1996) eight-step change model and Bridges' transition model are selected to guide and lead the change process within XX College. The organizational analysis identifies three possible solutions to address the PoP: (a) create and implement an inclusive leadership development program; (b) develop an equity, diversity, and inclusion and psychological safety strategy; and (c) reconceptualize human resource systems with an equity lens. The creation and implementation of an inclusive leadership development

program is the recommended solution. Ethical and social justice issues were explored, revealing opportunities to explore ethical tension and anticipatory justice within XX College.

Chapter 3 begins with a detailed change implementation plan, identifying how the proposed solution to the problem of practice, as experienced by XX College, may be advanced in pursuit of broader organizational improvement. Kotter's eight step model guides change implementation, supported by Bridges' transition model to outline how leaders and administrators at XX College can advance inclusive leadership practice as a means to create equity-focused psychologically safe environments. Implementation goals, challenges, and limitations are explored. Part of successful change implementation is focus on the change vision and ensuring that changes are implemented in ways that the organization and leaders can integrate into their work and practice (Battilana et al., 2010). While the recommended solution is composed of multiple change initiatives, for purposes of scope and ensuring the change activities are manageable, this change implementation plan focuses on implementation of the inclusive leadership development program. PDSA cycles and program impact evaluations are positioned as change measurement and evaluation strategies. Chapter 3 concludes with a deep analysis into the ways power overlaps with change communication. Gaventa's (2006) power cube is used as a framework to inform the change communication strategy and plan.

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Acronyms

CRT (Critical Race Theory)

EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

Psychological safety is particularly important in environments and organizational contexts that are marked by uncertainty, ambiguity, high-stakes accountability, professional hierarchies, and consumer demand to produce and provide high-quality service (Edmondson et al., 2016). As defined by Edmondson (1999), psychological safety is the belief that a team or team environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking without fear of humiliation, retaliation, or reprisal. One can engage in vulnerable activities such as asking questions, speaking up, or disagreeing without feeling like they will be ostracized for doing so. Organizational cultures and environments where pressure, anxiety, uncertainty, and prestige are common-place, including post-secondary institutions, benefit the most from strategic psychological safety interventions to support and mitigate the negative effects among individuals and teams working in high-stress and interdependent settings, including lower employee engagement, lower levels of interpersonal trust, and poorer operational outcomes (Edmondson et al., 2016; Schein & Bennis, 1965). The problem of practice presented within this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the lack of an institutional approach to creating equity-focused and psychologically safe climates at a multi-site post-secondary institution in Ontario. For purposes of anonymization, the organization will be referred to as XX College.

The social and interpersonal nature of higher education, and the larger socio-political and systemic structures that influence the institutional ways of being at XX College, align with the premise that psychological safety is experienced by different populations or communities in unique ways (Williams et al., 2016). This OIP seeks to posit that placing an equity lens on psychological safety will challenge systemic inequity and mitigate some barriers within post-secondary settings for members of marginalized communities. Further, this OIP seeks to

improve how equity-informed psychologically safe climates at XX College can be cultivated. Chapter one begins with an introduction to XX College by describing its brief history and organizational context. A leadership-focused vision for change will describe a future state informed by a leadership vision for change. After articulating my personal leadership position, the problem of practice will be explored via critical race and queer theory. The chapter concludes with an analysis of XX College's readiness for change.

Organizational Context and Brief History

The organization, XX College, is a multi-site community college campus located in Ontario. With three site locations, XX College was founded just over 50 years ago and serves over 16,000 students annually. With a strong focus on growth and expansion, XX College offers over 100 full time programs with addition part-time and continuing education courses. In addition, XX College is becoming increasingly focused on supporting international students. XX College is a publicly funded institution and blends applied research with hands-on practical learning. The institution prides itself on ensuring that graduates are prepared to enter the workforce immediately after completing their program. The organization is geographically situated near multiple First Nation communities, and within the last 12 years, has focused on building stronger community relationships with Indigenous leaders and community members.

Within the last year, XX College has made external and internal commitments to staff, faculty, and students on the intention to advance equity, inclusion, and psychological safety across the organization. This public commitment was made in June 2020, after protests and demonstrations were held in response to the murder of George Floyd. The murder of George Floyd brought institutional and organizational inequities to the forefront. The commitment made by XX College was similar to other statements made by multiple organizations across North

America, including other post-secondary institutions. The commitment made by XX College was not a formal position statement, which would reflect public endorsement of an organizational commitment, but rather, it was an acknowledgement of the opportunity and requirement of XX College to do better as it related to equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and psychological safety (Knopf et al, 2021). The lack of formal commitment could be interpreted as low organizational risk for public accountability and examination of organization action, or lack thereof.

The public commitment made by administrators on behalf of XX College is the first time the organization has engaged the local community beyond the student population. The commitment was visible to others outside of the internal student and faculty body, marking an important and critical shift in how XX College responds to socio-political influences. This shift has exposed an area of vulnerability and opportunity for administrators and senior leaders as faculty, students, and broader community audiences are paying close attention to how organizations fulfill their renewed commitments to social justice (Knopf et al., 2021). Internal, and more importantly, external pressures have contributed to spurring or accelerating organizational action in this area.

Vision, Mission, Values, and Organizational Purpose

In 2019, XX College underwent a new strategic planning cycle which yielded updated values and a clearer mission (XX College, 2019). The renewed mission of XX College clearly outlines the connection between education, research, and practical/real-world experiences. This newly revised mission statement is an organizational attempt to position XX College's purpose to serve as a good post-secondary choice where graduates will be more likely to be job ready and able to enter the labour market better prepared than other post-secondary graduates (XX College,

2019). In the current strategic plan, XX College has stated that it is also an organization of choice because it's commitment to inclusion and equity, referencing a focus on strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and students, meeting the needs of diverse populations, and renewing their focus on well-being, mental health, and psychological safety (XX College, 2019).

In addition to an updated mission statement, XX College included some new organizational values. Out of the current five organizational values that underpin the strategic plan, two values have remained consistent: inclusion and collaboration (XX College, 2019). While the value of inclusiveness remained consistent between strategic plan cycles, iterations of the strategic plan reveal that XX College has continued to attempt the same type of work with little to no observable, practical, or tangible movement forward. In the context of the problem of practice, this presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The mission and values of XX College are clear in supporting advancements to create equity-focused psychologically safe climates, however, successful organizational change within this area has been a challenge since 2015 (XX College, 2019). Implications of this organizational history are strong; change planning, change implementation, and change evaluation will be critical components to the success of an organizational improvement plan.

Organizational Structure

Similar to many other post-secondary institutions, XX College relies on a hierarchal organizational structure, separated between administration, academic leadership, and deans to oversee different functional areas of the organization. Within different schools or departments, organizational structure remains relatively consistent, involving formal levels of leadership at director and managerial levels as well as informal levels of leadership including coordinators and

work supervisors. In observing the hierarchal nature of XX College, the organizational structure relies in on a management-focused approach to leadership.

While not unique, the hierarchy of XX College has the potential to impact this problem of practice in significant ways. Not only does the hierarchy support or validate the perspectives and opinions of those in formal positions of power and authority, without careful guidance in change planning, administrators and faculty are likely to exacerbate the systemic barriers that have traditionally and intentionally excluded some communities from participating in institutional spaces (Fine, 2017). It is important to acknowledge that the organizational structure is unlikely to change; hierarchal decision-making processes and ways of functioning have been in place at XX College since its inception. Considering change interventions in the context of organizational hierarchy will be an important component of the organizational improvement plan.

Established Leadership Approaches

XX College does not have any formalized or established leadership approaches. The organization has not had or supported a XX College specific leadership development program; informal and formal leadership development is at the discretion of administrators, deans, and academic chairs. This has led to inconsistent leadership beliefs, styles, and practices across XX College. In the absence of a structured or established leadership approach, the organizational structure has created an internal environment where authoritative leadership behaviours, such as high levels of control by senior management members, are supported. In contrast, authentic leadership practices such as self-awareness, group trust, and integrity are encouraged and/or espoused by senior leaders (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). Fundamentally, authentic leadership

behaviours and practices are desired within XX College, but authoritative leadership behaviours are practiced.

Authoritative leadership behaviour includes unquestioned authority, asserting dominance, and requiring compliance or obedience (Asfar, 2014). This leadership approach can be observed within structural practices of XX College especially as it relates to policy development and implementation, organization-wide changes, mandatory practices, and some decision-making. The hierarchal organizational structure has reinforced some of these practices; top-down decisions are positioned as final, and compliance or obedience is expected. Yet, in organizational areas outside of policy and structural change, authentic leadership practices can be observed. The increased focus in some departments and program areas on trust, integrity, fostering a sense of purpose, and self-reflection on connection between personal and organizational values supports the advancement of authentic leadership principles (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). The stark difference between authoritative and authentic leadership styles has presented some tension within organizational leadership and will have strong implications in planning for organizational change. This tension is more fully explored in subsequent chapters.

Summary

The College is heavily focused on growth, expansion, and organizational sustainability. Recent commitments to equity, inclusion, and psychological safety present an opportunity for XX College to strengthen relationships with communities, students, and administrators. The hierarchal organizational structure and lack of established leadership approaches have contributed to top-down decision making and authoritative practices. This may present tension in future change initiatives as the existing approach is incongruent with equity, participatory decision making, inclusive leadership, and psychological safety.

Leadership Position and Lens

In this section, I will describe my own leadership agency within the context of XX College and in relationship to the problem of practice. I will position inclusive leadership as an appropriate leadership lens, explore inclusive leadership within broader leadership discourse, and link the role of an inclusive leader to successful organizational change.

Leadership Position

As the director of equity, diversity, inclusion, and organizational development, my portfolio includes two key aspects highlighted within this problem of practice: creating equitable and inclusive environments for the XX College community and overseeing the development of the broader organization including leadership development. While my primary client group includes leaders, staff, administrators and some faculty, my work impacts students as well. My position includes operationalizing equity, diversity, and inclusion strategies, developing an equity and inclusion framework, leading the multi-year accessibility plan, overseeing leadership and faculty development, change management, organizational development, and embedding an equity lens across broader human resource functions.

As a formal leader in the equity and inclusion space, personal leadership values of integrity, respect, authenticity, social justice, and relationship building emerge as guiding principles in my work. I am aware of the positional power I hold in this role as well as the identities I hold that afford me access to certain spaces, conversations, and privileges. Further, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the personal agency I hold in this organization. As a highly credentialed and educated leader, with multiple graduate degrees and professional certifications, I am mindful of how my voice may be positioned as the one of authority or expertise (O'Donovan et al., 2021). If I am to be in alignment with my leadership values and

leadership lens, discussed below, I must actively use the organizational influence my position holds to actively deconstruct the structures that permitted my voice to be held in higher regard in the first place (Fine, 2017). Through interactions with other leaders, administrators, faculty, and students, I aim to recognize and acknowledge how my own perspectives, experiences, and worldviews shape my language, behaviours, and practices.

Leadership Lens

My leadership approach is positioned and considered through an inclusive leadership lens. Inclusive leadership is a relatively new leadership approach, when compared to other leadership theories, and has only been reflected in the literature within the last two decades (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). The emerging attempts to explore and position inclusive leadership in broader leadership theory have contributed to a lack of formal definition; the literature does not present consensus on who is or is not an inclusive leader (Randel et al., 2018). There is, however, consensus on behaviours that align with inclusive leadership practice (Cottrill et al., 2014). Randel et al. (2018) define five key inclusive leader behaviours including supporting group members, shared decision-making, ensuring justice and equity, encouraging diverse contributions, and helping group members fully contribute. This is supported by other authors and supporting tenets include self-awareness, indicating value for uniqueness, and facilitating belongingness (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). An important distinction between inclusive leadership and other leadership styles is that inclusive leadership practice leverages these tenets and behaviours with the explicit aim of deconstructing organizational systems and practices founded on power, privilege, and oppression (Merlini et al., 2019). Morgan (2017) supports this distinction, acknowledging that inclusive leaders move beyond general diversity and actively seek out different perspectives and viewpoints.

In the context of this problem of practice, the literature reveals notable connections between inclusive leadership and psychological safety. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) were the first to propose the concept of leader inclusive inclusiveness, and in this seminal work, hypothesized that leader inclusiveness predicts psychological safety. Carmeli et al. (2010) found that when leaders exhibit inclusive behaviours such as accessibility, openness, and availability, the psychological safety of their follows improved. Zeng et al. (2020) pose an alternative perspective; when followers feel psychologically safe in a leader follower relationship, they are less likely to worry about the potential negative outcomes of bringing their whole selves to work and engaging in risky interpersonal behaviours such as speaking up, asking questions, disagreeing, and providing alternative perspectives.

The impact of the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological safety has strong implications for my role as a change leader. The intersection between inclusive leadership and psychological safety presents tension; does a leader need to be inclusive to create psychological safety or do they need to create psychologically safe climates to support inclusion? It is where an inclusive leadership lens falls short, both in research and application. While inclusive leadership is positioned as an antecedent to psychological safety, there is little literature that investigates the positioning of psychological safety as creating inclusiveness (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Nembard & Edmondson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018). Metaphorically, it is like the chicken and the egg; which comes first and how does this impact application or integration of inclusive leadership practice in pursuit of psychological safety?

Through an inclusive leadership lens, I am called to develop collective strategies to support institutional change with the intent of marrying inclusion, equity, and psychological safety. As I have described, an inclusive leadership lens demands the interrogation of power

structures, active removal of systemic barriers, and the fostering of relationships through acknowledging status and power differentials (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Joseph & Winston, 2005). To lead this change, I will have to work with change agents, resisters, and champions to build an environment responsive to the socio-political culture of post-secondary institutions. XX College, like many other higher education organizations, has a deep organizational memory of past unsuccessful change initiatives that may impact some levels of change willingness. For change to be successful, deep consideration and engagement with members of equity-deserving communities will be essential, as my own perspectives of what needs to change will be influenced by my biases and leadership exposure to different epistemologies.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the limitations of an inclusive leadership lens, especially when applied to this problem of practice in isolation, that is, without consideration of other leadership theories. Though inclusive leadership practices aim to actively encourage perspectives from members of various communities, this approach has the potential to minimize or erase the complex relationship between power and oppression, especially in the ways this relationship may sustain or perpetuate the marginalization of equity-deserving communities (Choo & Ferree, 2010). Given my agency and position within the organization, if I have the power to include someone, I also have the power to exclude someone. My position allows me to make some autonomous decisions and that ability warrants close examination in the context of this problem of practice. Intending to integrate inclusive leadership tenets into my leadership practice without social action and organizational change may end up reproducing and reinforcing systemic barriers and historically oppressive institutional practices (Fine, 2017; Joseph & Winston, 2005). Fine (2017) succinctly summarizes this limitation by questioning “is inclusive leadership doing enough to ask whose table at which we hope to convene, why we’re not all at

that table in the first place, or what keeps us from joining that table even if we would like to do so?” (p. 30).

To mediate the limitations of an inclusive leadership approach, literature suggests that servant leadership theory overlaps with inclusive leadership and may attenuate some imbalances observed when viewing this problem of practice solely through an inclusive leadership lens. Gotsis and Grimani (2016) hypothesize that “inclusive practices supported by servant leaders will mediate the relationship between servant leadership and climates for inclusion” (p. 993). Servant leaders go beyond satisfying their own needs or self-interests and explicitly focus on addressing and meeting the needs of their followers (Chughtai, 2016). This approach aligns well with the vision and mission of XX College as organizational culture has been crafted around focusing on, and serving, the student. Leading with an inclusive leadership approach, complemented by a servant leadership stance, will allow me to navigate the power imbalances caused by my formal leadership position.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The following section describes the problem of practice by articulating the gap between the current state and a more desirable, yet achievable, future organizational state, subject to change planning and implementation activities.

Leadership Problem of Practice Statement

The problem of practice that is examined in this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is the lack of an equity-focused psychologically safe climates within a post-secondary institution in Ontario. Psychological safety, an antecedent to feelings of belongingness, trust, vulnerability, creativity, and innovation, has become increasingly recognized as the hallmark of top tier organizations (Edmondson et al., 2016). Psychological safety, first mentioned in the literature by

Schein and Bennis (1965) was positioned in the field of organizational sciences and was introduced as an individual level construct. Through the lens of organizational improvement, psychological safety was established as a key component of organizational learning. Edmondson (1999) expanded on this concept and explored applications in team settings. Both perspectives are seminal works in psychological safety research and can be considered complementary views of the same construct (Frazier et al., 2011). At XX College, senior leadership has recognized the important impact that psychological safety has on both work and learning, and has committed to creating an inclusive, equitable, and psychologically safe environment for the entire XX College community. However, many faculty members, administrators, and leaders feel unprepared to champion this commitment; the responsibility of creating psychologically safe climates lacks formal definition, although it has begun to overlap and intersect with leadership functions related to organizational inclusion and the pursuit of equitable organizational practices (Randel et al., 2018).

Many organizations that attempt to create greater psychological safety and inclusion are unsuccessful because they have not applied an equity lens to initiatives aimed at creating psychologically safe environments (Foley et al., 2002; Singh et al., 2013; Singh & Winkel, 2012). Singh et al. (2013) caution that psychological safety is not a one size fits all. Rather, differences in identity, including racial, gender, ethnic, cultural, disability, and sexual identities, contribute to different experiences and perceptions of what is considered psychologically safe and is influenced by the context of the organization (Singh et al., 2013). When viewed through a leadership lens, power and influence over work and learning climates uniquely positions administrators and faculty to create environments that support learning, creativity, questioning, interpersonal risk taking, resiliency through change, vulnerability, and engagement; all tenets of

a psychologically safe climate (Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2016; Kahn, 1990). Yet, little attention is paid to the intersection of psychologically safe climates and the inequitable socio-political environment of post-secondary institutions. As such, leaders in XX College who attempt to create psychologically safe climates often exacerbate systemic inequities which have disproportionate negative impacts on marginalized staff and students (Singh et al., 2013). Thus, the problem of practice to be explored is, what structures and strategies might support administrators and faculty in creating equity-focused psychologically safe climates to promote an inclusive and equitable organization?

Current State

Currently, XX College has largely relied on the current strategic plan to define current and future organizational states. It reflects a commitment to ensuring that marginalized staff and students can use their voice, ensuring that XX College is meeting the needs of diverse populations, and creating a culture that respects and values the opinions and ideas of all people (XX College, 2021). The current state reflects a commitment and shared desire to create greater psychological safety, equity, and inclusion, though little action has taken place since the release of the strategic plan in 2019. Equity and diversity services are provided both by human resources and student affairs. The degree of coordination, alignment, and skill/expertise between these departments varies significantly due to many organizational barriers including funding, structure, oversight, and ownership of the work. In alignment with XX College's vision, described in the strategic plan, an integrated approach through capacity building, service delivery, leadership development, and coordination of support can work towards addressing or closing gaps between senior management and academic leadership.

Future State

The ideal future state of XX College is one where administrators, staff, faculty, and students experience equity-focused psychologically safe climates within their work and learning spaces. All members of the XX College community feel they can bring their whole selves to work/school without fear of negative consequences or reprisal for being themselves (Soares & Lopes, 2020). Ideally, administrators, faculty, and students share in the belief that their identities, perspectives, beliefs, and experiences are valuable, welcomed, and encouraged (Williams et al., 2016). Interpersonally risky behaviours such as questioning, disagreeing, or sharing alternative perspectives are not only welcomed but actively encouraged, especially by those in positions of leadership and/or authority (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Within this future state vision, administrators and faculty aim to cultivate equity-focused psychologically safe climates by actively challenging and dismantling organizational systems and practices founded on privilege, oppression, and systemic exclusion (Merlini et al., 2019). Ideally, XX College leaders move beyond generally welcoming diverse perspectives towards actively seeking out differing viewpoints and perspectives (Morgan, 2017).

Summary

This problem of practice focuses on identifying strategies to create equity-focused psychologically safe environments within post-secondary institutions. Applying an equity lens to psychological safety is critical, as the experience of safety, as discussed in the above section, is impacted by your identity, social location, and experiences and perceptions of what is considered psychologically safe. The current state at XX College reflects commitment and desire to create equity-informed psychologically safe climates, though lack of coordination and

misalignment between skill and expertise has contributed to the gap between current state and envisioned future state.

Framing the Problem of Practice

The following section frames and situates the problem of practice within critical theories, including queer theory and critical race theory. Recent literature is explored as well as external data that supports and frames priorities for change.

Organizational Theories: Critical Race Theory and Queer Theory

While XX College has not selected or integrated a specific organizational or critical theory to support or frame the strategic initiatives related to psychological safety, equity, or inclusive, some administrators have acknowledged the disproportionate impacts of systemic discrimination on racialized community members. Thus, critical race theory has been selected as one of two theories to frame an institutional approach to creating equity-focused psychologically safe climates. Complementing critical race theory, queer theory has been selected as a supporting framework to frame and re-frame the positioning of dominant narratives as normal or status quo (Rumens et al., 2019).

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) interrogates institutionalized racism and racial inequity (Howard & Navarro, 2016; Sleeter, 2016). Tenets of CRT includes centering experiences of race/racism from the perspectives of racialized people, challenging dominant perspectives, and a foundational commitment to social justice (Howard & Navarro, 2016). This theoretical approach provides unique insight into framing this problem of practice for XX College. First, CRT requires the acknowledgement that higher education institutions are not race neutral (Ray, 2019). Rather, they are socio-political institutions with strong forces in creating, maintaining, and

transforming racial inequity (Omi & Winant, 2015; Ray, 2019). Post-secondary environments are often laced with undertones of saviorism and nobility, suggesting that the pursuit of higher education creates equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of background, experience, or identity (Patton, 2016). This approach is not only rooted in presumed meritocracy, racism, and classism, it absolves organizations of institutional responsibility to take greater accountability for the role in which higher education systemically and systematically contributes to ongoing racial inequity (Patton, 2016).

Thus, the lack of equity-focused psychologically safe climates could be considered as intentional institutional practices, supported by a long-standing organizational structure that was historically designed to create power imbalances (Hiraldo, 2010). Implications of this institutional framing are significant as any change priorities in pursuit of creating equity-focused psychologically safe climates will contrast with long-standing and well-entrenched racialized institutional systems found within higher education organizations. This is supported by Hiraldo (2010), noting that the “systemic reality works against building a diverse and inclusive higher education environment because it supports the imbedded hierarchal racist paradigms that currently exist in our society” (pp. 55).

Second, through the lens of CRT, an institutional approach to creating equity-focused psychological safety requires administrators and faculty to de-center their perspectives in pursuit of challenging the systems that allowed their perspectives and voices to be regarded as legitimate (Fine, 2017; Gillborn, 2005). This framing requires investigation into power, power imbalances, and power re-distribution. As noted above, if one holds the power to include/create safety, they also have the power to exclude/create unsafety. Further exploration into this power binary and power imbalance introduces the application of a queer theory lens and is discussed below.

Queer Theory

Queer theory is a conceptual framework that challenges, examines, interrogates, and problematizes the positioning and regulation of normativity (Gedro & Mizzi, 2014; McCann & Monaghan, 2020; Rumens et al., 2019). To apply queer theory, or undertake the process of “queering”, is to challenge and resist norms and binaries (McCann & Monaghan, 2020). In viewing this problem of practice through the lens of queer theory, theoretical tenets would suggest the organizational reconceptualization of the concept of safety as a change imperative. Key questions begin to arise, such as who defines safety, who determines if a climate is safe or unsafe, and does the positioning of safe/unsafe create a harmful binary? It is through the lens of queer theory that mitigation of the relationship between leadership power and psychological safety may be positioned as an activity for change.

Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental Factors

To contextualize the problem of practice, the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors (PESTE) that impact and influence XX College will be explored. The political position that XX College finds itself in is like other organizations who have made outward commitments to greater equity and inclusion; there is political risk of being described as performative (Knopf et al., 2021). When an organization declares greater commitments, but does not act on those promises, the declaration can be categorized or classified as an act or a performance. The performance may benefit the organization in the short term by garnering broader community support for their apparent social justice work via institutional change (Knopf et al., 2021). This political risk is connected to the social risk and could be framed as socio-political. After the summer of 2020, many organizations made lofty public claims and both

faculty and student audiences are paying close attention to how organizations fulfill their commitments (Knopf et al., 2021).

While XX College is a public institution and does receive federal and provincial funding for some initiatives, student enrollment and satisfaction does have an impact on the financial health of the organization (XX College, 2021). Economic factors may also be connected to socio-political factors; tuition fees and public funding may be influenced by the extent to which XX College is positioned as a college of choice. Reasonably, it could be expected that some students may choose or make decisions on post-secondary location due to the extent that they feel included and safe within the campus community.

Technological factors related to this problem of practice can be found within change measurement and evaluation. Lack of technology is a concern for XX College, especially related to systems that support data collection and retention (XX College, 2021). XX College would need to determine, as part of aiming to create psychologically safe climates, whether technology will support the evaluation of this problem of practice. Data collection and evaluation is not currently streamlined within XX College.

Finally, in framing this problem of practice, XX College must also consider internal and external environmental factors. Internally, XX College's senior leadership and administration suggest they welcome the changes required to advance and support this problem of practice, though expectations of change are not universally experienced or accepted among various levels across the employee population. For example, faculty have voiced reservations about taking on additional work responsibilities that are not part of their job, so this change initiative lacks leadership ownership. Externally, XX College is geographically situated near multiple First Nation communities. To meet commitments to advancing the interests of Indigenous people and

strengthening community relationships in surrounding external environments, XX College must also consider Indigenous epistemologies in this problem of practice. Social justice, Indigenous perspectives, and ethical considerations will be further discussed in chapter two.

Recent Literature

A review of literature on equity-focused psychologically safe climates highlights the critical role that leaders play in promoting psychological safety in higher education (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Drawing from the organizational sciences as well as organizational psychology, there are strong and emerging implications for psychological safety in post-secondary environments (Frazier et al., 2017; Edmondson et al., 2016). Psychological safety is often viewed as a learning construct, with ties to constructivist theory (Edmondson et al., 2016). Constructivist theory suggests all learning is socially constructed in relation to existing knowledge (Bada, 2015). Psychological safety extends this approach, acknowledging that the process of learning and sense making requires the learner to confront personal values, beliefs, identities. To engage in this deeper level of intrapersonal reflection and exploration, the learner must feel psychologically safe to engage in the possibility of discomfort, risk, and interpersonal harm (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Holly & Steiner, 2005; Williams et al., 2016). Psychological safety is often positioned as a leadership function as leaders are often tasked with supporting individuals who are engaging in risk (Edmondson, 2003; Williams et al., 2016).

Equity-focused psychological safety is an emerging theme in the literature. Power and influence over work and learning climates uniquely positions administrators and faculty to create environments that support learning, creativity, questioning, interpersonal risk taking, resiliency through change, vulnerability, and engagement; all hallmarks of a psychologically safe climate (Edmondson, 1999; Frazier et al., 2017; Kahn, 1990). However, the application of an equity lens

on strategies to support and cultivate greater psychological safety is not well understood. The implications of not applying an equity lens are clear; promoting psychological safety without equity not only leads to greater harm in minority populations, it also cements long-standing organizational structures that benefit or privilege dominant perspectives and identities (Singh et al., 2013; Singh & Winkel, 2012). In addition, more research is needed to determine whether hallmarks of equity-focused psychologically safe climates, as defined in the literature, are interpreted by key audiences, including staff and students with marginalized identities, as being psychologically safe and inclusive (Shore et al., 2018).

Summary

Viewing this problem of practice through the lenses of critical race theory and queer theory frame and re-frame how systemic structures and ways of being have contributed to the marginalization and oppression of equity-deserving communities. The reconceptualization of safety, and who defines what is safe or unsafe, becomes an important component of this problem. The implications of this framing are important in developing the leadership focused vision for change as the organizational context and environment have strong influence on experiences of psychological unsafety.

Guiding Questions from the Problem of Practice

In an organizational environment, psychological safety means that one can bring their whole, authentic, intersectional self to work without fear of reprisal, harm, or interpersonal risk (Edmondson, 1999; Khan, 1990). Psychological safety is particularly important in organizational settings where high stress, high accountability, and hierarchal leadership structures guide practice and function (Edmondson et al., 2016; Schein & Bennis, 1965). This is supported by Bergmann and Schaeppi (2016) as they acknowledge that psychological safety is

the number one attribute of high-performing teams. Understanding and exploring what makes a team or organizational environment psychologically safe has been the focus of research across multiple fields, including organizational sciences, health care, education, manufacturing, construction, and human resources (Bradley et al., 2012; Carmeli & Gittell, 2008; Edmondson et al., 2016; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Javed et al., 2017).

Yet, within decades of research, little attention has been paid to how psychological safety might be experienced, changed, or shaped by an equity lens. Application of an equity lens, to better conceptualize how members of marginalized communities experience psychological safety, is not well reflected in the literature (Singh & Winkel, 2012). The implications of not applying an equity lens, as described earlier in the chapter, lead to greater harm in marginalized populations by potentially reinforcing organizational structures and behaviours that privilege dominant perspectives and identities (Singh et al., 2013; Singh & Winkel, 2012). Hiraldo (2010) offers that the systemic structure of higher education environments actively works against creating diverse and equitable institutions because of the embedded structural racist paradigms of post-secondary settings. Thus, an emerging question is *what are the key components of psychological safety when viewed through an equity lens?*

When considering this topic through the lens of queer theory, psychological safety is positioned as a binary construct; it is either psychologically safe or unsafe (Gedro & Mizzi, 2014; Rumens et al., 2019). To apply a queer theory lens on psychological safety would be to reconceptualize psychological safety as a fluid, non-binary concept and to question who defines safety and who determines if a climate is safe or unsafe. Literature is still emerging as to how psychological unsafety is defined. It is not positioned as the absence of factors or characteristics of psychological safety, but rather actions and behaviours that actively create psychological harm

including actively dismissing employee perspectives, berating employees for mistakes, and a resistance to seeking innovative ways of problem solving (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001; Edmondson, 2004; Edmondson, 1999). The current work into psychological unsafety does not consider organizational culture, state, or structure or intersecting identities of individuals seeking psychological safety within socio-political institutions. Thus, as an extension of the question above, in considering psychological safety through an equity lens, *what causes psychological unsafety among equity-deserving communities?*

Finally, though research has extensively focused on what makes a team environment or organizational climate psychologically safe, there is little empirical support to guide scholar-practitioners on how to create those climates (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). The belief that an environment or space is safe for idea sharing, speaking up, challenging dominant perspectives/the status quo, and critically interrogating ideas and solutions is what defines the concept of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson, 2003; Frazier et al., 2017). Yet, there is not consensus on how to create this climate that supports or encourages this belief or who takes responsibility for it. Most scholars hypothesize that modelling and demonstrating behaviours are a way of initially creating psychological safety and that leadership practices and ways of being are the most impactful (Edmondson, 2003; Edmondson et al., 2016). For example, when someone disagrees with the solution to a problem, a leader may encourage psychological safety by welcoming others to disagree and supporting constructive dialogue in pursuit of a better solution. As Remtulla et al. (2021) note, “whilst the literature makes clear that leaders are crucial in facilitating psychological safety [...], there is little focus on how other team members may help to improve the psychological safety of their environment” (pp. 3). To examine this element of the problem of practice, an emerging question is *what strategies might*

support administrators and faculty in creating equity-focused psychologically safe climates to promote an inclusive and equitable organization?

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

In an above section, leadership problem of practice statement, a future vision statement has been described. The future vision statement details the ways in which equity-focused psychologically safe climates could be experienced at XX College; community members feel they can bring themselves and their experiences to work/school without fear of reprisal for being themselves, administrators and faculty share in the belief that their identities, perspectives, and experiences are valuable, and that innovative and creative behaviours such as questioning, disagreeing, or sharing alternative perspectives are encouraged (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Soares & Lopes, 2020; Williams et al., 2016). Indeed, these are all benefits and/or outcomes of having psychological safety and literature supports these factors as being positively correlated to psychologically safe experiences (Edmondson et al., 2016).

This OIP explores how these positive outcomes of psychological safety may be created, thus framing the leadership-focused vision for change. In an ideal future state, faculty members, staff, and administrators would know how to create equity-focused psychological safety and are active in adopting and embodying practices and behaviours that are supportive of psychological safety. They move from being able to articulate the benefits or outcomes of having psychological safety to being intentional, purposeful, and active in integrating behaviours and practices to create psychologically safe climates in an equity-focused way. This vision for change, however, is challenged by limited research in the area. The few antecedents of psychological safety reflected in the literature include leadership behaviour, leader inclusiveness, and respectful relationships among team members (Edmondson, 2004; Hirak et al., 2012).

Change Gap

There is no explicit organizational focus or strategy on promoting and advancing equity-focused psychologically safe climates at XX College. Some equity-focused work has taken place, though not connected to psychologically safe climates. The leadership-focused vision for change is a sharp difference from existing practice within XX College. The change gap is defined by lack of leadership ownership and responsibility related to psychological safety, deficits in knowledge, skills, and abilities when aiming to create psychologically safe environments, and a generalized resistance to change initiatives.

Impact and Implications of Future State

The impact of a future state where leaders feel equipped to create and contribute to the creation of equity-focused psychologically safe climates is two-fold. First, the act of intentionally creating psychological safety at XX College is missing. Thus, by intentionally taking leadership action to create psychological safety, the benefits of psychological safety could be realized by all team members (Edmondson et al., 2016). It would be reasonable to expect that improved leadership practice, such as focusing on inclusive leadership behaviours that serve as antecedents to psychological safety, would result in greater interpersonal risk taking, exploration of creative and novel ideas, innovation, learning, and interpersonal satisfaction (Kark & Carmeli, 2009).

Second, there are specific implications for members of equity-deserving communities, including those with intersecting social identities. An equity lens on psychological safety demands that leaders interrogate structures that permit or sustain inequity to begin with. Organizational structures, including higher education institutions, legitimize the unequal and inequitable distribution of resources, access to information, access to leadership, and institutional

power (Ray, 2019). Dominance, such as whiteness, maleness, heteronormativity, and ableness, are credentials or requirements for success in many organizational structures (Ray, 2019).

Tenets of critical race theory and queer theory support this positioning. By re-conceptualizing psychological safety with an equity lens, leaders are presented with the opportunity to criticize and problematize structural discrimination at the institutional level (Ray, 2019). In attempting to create psychologically safe climates, a leader who applies an equity lens is more likely to consider how identity and social location influence perceptions of psychological safety (Singh et al., 2013; Ray, 2019). Thus, by attenuating for power and status differentials through an equity lens, followers with marginalized intersecting social identities may feel that the organizational climate has created space to bring those identities more fully into the workspace.

Organizationally, the opportunity to benefit from diversity of thought, experience, and background is likely to be improved (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

Change Drivers

Whelan-Berry and Somerville (2010) share that change drivers are events, activities, and behaviours that facilitate the implementation of change. These events may be internal or external to the organization. External socio-political activities emerge most prominently, such as the international protests taking place of the murder of George Floyd or the collective demand for government and institutional accountability as the discoveries of mass unmarked graves at Canadian residential schools continue to rise, have served as prominent change drivers for XX College. The expectations of the XX College community are a key driving force. To be responsive the XX College community, change must be proactive, collaborative, and strategic (Eddy, 2003). The protests of summer 2020 and beyond have created an environment where this change could be positioned as a form of social justice revolution, shifting from change driver to

change demand. Ultimately, XX College must respond to this change demand, or it is at risk of perpetuating racial and identity-based harm among staff, students, and faculty.

Complementary to the above noted external change driver, internally, the creation of my role could be positioned as a change driver. While a titled or formal leadership position is not a requirement of a change leader, changes in organizational structure and human resource practices have been repeatedly acknowledged in the literature as change drivers (Nadler & Tushman, 1980; Somerville & Dyke, 2008; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). The introduction of my position has functioned as an internal change driver as there has never been a dedicated role in the history of XX College focused on equity, inclusion, and psychological safety.

Role of Social Justice and Decolonization

Social justice and decolonization play a significant role in this vision for change. Academia has long been unsuccessful in decolonization and/or Indigenization as the structural harm of the higher education institution is never brought to the forefront. Rather, decolonization efforts in higher education have tried to integrate Indigenous approaches while maintaining systems of harm, dominance, and oppression that have resulted inequitable outcomes to begin with (Schmidt, 2019). This could be viewed as an academic form of assimilation; supporting Indigenous perspectives but only to the extent that they fit within the social, political, and psychological constructs of the institution. This notion can be applied an extended to other forms of inequity, harm, and exclusion. Fay (2018) offers that anyone can become a decolonizer by “sharing power, equalizing privilege, and challenging the assumptions of superiority and inferiority that sustain unbalanced power and privilege” (pp. 52). In this vision for change, actively looking ways to give up power/share power, challenging dominant perspectives through

creating psychological safety, and acknowledging the Westernized and colonial structure of higher education will be critical in advancing social justice through this problem of practice.

Summary

The change gap within XX College is defined by lack of leadership ownership and responsibility related to psychological safety, deficits in knowledge, skills, and abilities when aiming to create psychologically safe environments, and a generalized resistance to change initiatives. In a future vision state, acknowledging the role of a leader and by aiming to attenuate for power and status differentials through an equity lens, followers with marginalized intersecting social identities may feel that the organizational climate has created space to bring those identities more fully into the workspace. The impact of this future vision may allow those across the XX College community to benefit from diversity of thought and experience, feel able to bring all parts of their identities into shared spaces, and challenge dominant perspectives to realign access to power and self-determination. The success of this future vision hinges on positive levels of organizational change readiness.

Organizational Change Readiness

Aiming to create equity-focused psychologically safe climates will require extensive organizational change; psychological safety does not happen accidentally and applying an equity lens must be intentional otherwise any planned change is likely to replicate or duplicate systemic and organizational barriers for marginalized community members (O'Donovan & McAuliffe, 2020). While there is not consensus on a single way to create psychological safety, the absence of a defined effort to enhance or develop psychological safety will perpetuate status quo. Literature links psychological safety with change-oriented leadership, suggesting that leaders who are attuned with the internal and external organizational change often position their teams to

envision change possibilities, question change priorities, and bring new opportunities forward (Remtulla et al., 2021). In the context of this problem of practice, and in relationship to psychological safety, this may position organizational change and change readiness assessment as a key leadership function. Thus, explicitly exploring leadership readiness for change will be critical in assessing broad organizational readiness for change at XX College.

To capture and assess organizational change readiness from multiple perspectives, Lehman et al.'s (2002) organizational change readiness framework will be used. This framework presents four key areas of assessment, including motivational readiness, institutional resources, staff attributes, and organizational climate (Lehman et al., 2002). This framework was specifically chosen as it addresses both organizational climate and leadership from the perspective of motivation and attributes. In addition to the framework by Lehman et al. (2002), Vakola's (2013) conceptual approach to multilevel organizational change readiness will be used to support readiness assessment at micro, meso, and macro levels.

Motivational Readiness

Senior administrators and some academic leaders, including academic chairs and program leads, have declared their commitment and motivation for change, suggesting some level of motivation readiness at XX College. Motivational readiness stems from perceived needs for change and recognizing that change action can, and should, be taken (Lehman et al., 2002). While the same levels of motivation are not observed across all leadership areas, XX College has begun to document a need for change through formal and informal conversations with faculty, staff, and students. Within the last ten months, this shift from anecdotal experiences of psychological harm or unsafety to internally documented and captured needs has spurred greater

openness and desire for change through increased change discussions at multiple levels of leadership.

In pursuit of challenging the status quo, questioning dominant narratives, and evaluating the systems and structures that create psychological safety for some but not all, it is expected that any level of organizational change that seeks to disrupt power imbalances may be questioned or actively resisted (Shore et al., 2018; Fine, 2017). This resistance, in the context of this problem of practice, does not signal a lack of organizational readiness. Rather, it may be positioned as a signal towards change. Consensus on equity-based topics often indicates surface level commitments that do not truly address key systemic issues or opportunities for change; active resistance is expected (Blaisdell, 2019). Thus, the lack of consistent motivational readiness among all organizational leaders is not concerning, though attention should be given to the pervasiveness of active change resistance.

Institutional Resources

As in many higher education institutions, XX College is trying to do more with less, especially in response to fiscal constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within Lehman et al.'s (2002) model, institutional resources include physical spaces such as offices, staffing levels, training resources, and technological supports. XX College has institutional resources to support change implementation including physical space, capacity to support training and learning, and cross-departmental resources to support some additional staffing. Pending senior administrator approval, some support may be required to ensure leaders have time and capacity to engage in change activities.

Staff Attributes

Staff attributes and levels of staff functioning influence organizational readiness for change. Attributes to be investigated specifically include the level that staff are willing to engage in growth activities, attitudes toward change, the willingness to consider influences of other people, and ability to adapt to changing environments (Lehman et al., 2002). With respect to psychological safety, this is a critical area for XX College and, more broadly, other higher education institutions attempting to create psychologically safe climates. Levels of staff functioning in most areas that connect with equity and inclusion topics, including those that may cause some discomfort, is consumed with fear and anxiety. Middle managers, support staff, and faculty have communicated a desire to engage in organizational change to support equity-focused psychologically safe climates but are paralyzed by a fear of getting it wrong and/or creating greater harm. This fear is expressed as an unwillingness to engage in material within learning environments or by requesting extensive support through student services or the human resources equity office. The observed desire to create change and a willingness to engage in behaviours that would support change suggests a level of organizational readiness within this dimension, though it also reveals an important consideration for how this change is applied and evaluated.

At the leadership level, the intersection between psychological safety and change readiness presents tension within this dimension of Lehman et al.'s (2002) framework at XX College. Applying an equity lens to psychological safety puts some leaders in a vulnerable position as it requires them to explore, acknowledge, and reflect on the power and social advantage they hold (Shore et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). To engage in this change activity, it requires leaders to already experience some level of psychological safety to support them in engaging in interpersonally risky behaviours such as speaking up, asking questions, and adopting

a learner stance (O'Donovan et al., 2021). Given the levels of support leaders have requested in smaller equity-related initiatives, it may be reasonable to expect that leadership psychological safety will need to be addressed within change communications to further promote organizational change readiness among leaders at XX College.

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate at XX College is a critical area to explore readiness for change as it includes intangible organizational artifacts such as goal clarity, group cohesion, cooperation, and openness (Lehman, 2002). There is opportunity to strengthen organizational readiness in this area. Linking change activities and outcomes to leadership duties and responsibilities would contribute to improved goal clarity and cooperation within XX College. Acknowledging that many leaders have competing demands and priorities, it is likely that some may not cooperate until the connection between leadership expectation and equity-focused psychological safety is explicitly established.

Micro, Meso, and Macro Level Change Readiness

At the micro level, individual readiness for change is critical to change success (Vakola, 2013). Lehman et al.'s (2002) framework explores individual readiness for change through the lens of motivation, where Vakola (2013) suggests that "resistance and positive or negative attitudes towards change is considered an outcome variable of high or low individual readiness for change" (pg. 99). Historically, XX College has not planned or been well-prepared for organizational change initiatives. This lack of planning and integration has led to change apathy and negative change perspectives among many employees (Weiner, 2009). This approach, combined with Lehman et al.'s (2002) framework suggests that individual readiness for change

may be compromised at XX College due to poorly planned change in previous organizational initiatives.

Meso level, or group readiness for change, is based on collective perceptions and beliefs that change is needed, that the organization will benefit from change, and that the group can cope with change requirements (Vakola, 2013). Meso level change readiness varies across XX College. Some departments, such as human resources and institutional research, are better positioned to navigate this change due to previous change interactions with equity-related topics. The connection between micro and meso level change readiness is positively correlated; groups reporting higher levels of individual readiness will also report higher levels of group readiness (Vakola, 2013). The inconsistency of individual change readiness suggests that change readiness at the group level may not exist (Weiner, 2009). Thus, even though some departments at XX College may be more prepared, this may not translate into meso level readiness.

Macro, or organizational, readiness for change includes the mechanisms, policies, and processes that either encourage or discourage change including organizational structure, leadership, and culture (Vakola, 2013). Vakola's (2003) approach suggested that "organizational readiness to change will be positively influenced by a high level of individual readiness to change", connecting the "background conversations of the organization" to change readiness (pp. 102). XX College has a complex and comprehensive system of policies and processes that govern various ways of being across the organization. The complexity of macro structures may impact change success. For example, change initiatives may be impacted by a subsequent or unexpected need to change policy or process, an arduous process within the institution. Macro level change readiness may also be impacted by scattered micro and meso level change attitudes among leaders and employees. The inconsistency among meso level readiness may translate into

challenges and resistance at the macro level via inconsistent levels of individual and department change readiness.

Summary

At the micro level, XX College may not be fully ready to undergo a change of this breadth and scope. Past poorly planned change initiatives coupled with varying levels of interest and motivation will be challenges within the change process. Evaluating change readiness at meso and macro levels suggests greater levels of change readiness across XX College.

Organizational climate and staff attributes at these levels suggest unique opportunities for change; connecting change activities with leadership and administrative responsibilities may foster a sense of purpose and utility within the change process. Considering all dimensions, XX College is well positioned to initiate organizational change if change barriers at the micro level are carefully considered, supported, and managed.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

This first chapter described the context and environment of XX College including a brief history, leadership approaches to change, and an exploration of the current state. A clear change gap was identified by examining the current state of XX College and using critical race theory and queer theory to frame the problem. Finally, XX College's change readiness was analyzed using Lehman et al.'s (2002) organizational change readiness framework, supported by Vakola's (2013) conceptual approach to overlay change readiness at micro, meso, and macro levels.

Chapter 2 will expand on discussions with Chapter 1 by exploring leadership approaches to change, a framework for leading the change process, and possible solutions to the problem of practice.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 2 will begin with an exploration of inclusive leadership as a leadership approach to change. Inclusive leadership and the relationship to organizational change presents a new intersection within leadership theory and discourse. As a relatively new leadership approach, change management and approaches to change must be carefully and thoughtfully selected, especially in recognition of the unique, and often traumatic, experiences of marginalized people in organizations. The ways in which inclusive leadership practice may inform change processes are still emerging within the literature. To support the exploration of how inclusive leadership will propel equity-focused psychological change within XX College, the relationships among critical race theory, queer theory, and change will also be examined via Nadler and Tushman's (1980) congruence model. Three possible solutions to the problem are explored, concluding with the identification of a preferred solution and a brief exploration into resourcing, challenges, and limitations.

Leadership Approach to Change: Inclusive Leadership

Though the relationship between inclusive leadership and organizational change is still emerging within the literature, recent research has demonstrated connections between inclusive leadership practice and change-orientated organizational behaviour (Younas, 2020). Acknowledging the complex nature of change related to equity, inclusive leadership may serve as a mediating influence between change resistance and individual identity as inclusive leaders ensure that those involved with change have access to the decision-making process (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Qi & Liu, 2017, Younas, 2020). The relationship between equity, perceived inequity, and change resistance is more fully explored in the section below.

In consideration of the problem of practice, inclusive leadership aims to propel change at XX College through two primary factors: encouraging voice and trust in the change process. Fundamentally, this approach aligns with both the organizational context of XX College and the topic of equity-focused psychological safety. Encouraging voice can be conceptualized as speaking up behaviour, meaning, leaders, participants in change, change agents, and change resisters would be confident and capable of inserting their voices and perspectives in an active and participatory way (Edmondson, 1999). Trust, a unique and distinct concept from psychological safety, speaks to the leader-follower relationship in the change process. Within the context of this problem of practice, trust in the change process can be conceptualized as the belief that an individual holds about themselves within the change process. It may be likened to principles of anticipatory justice, where individuals believe that they will be treated fairly in a planned change (Rodell & Colquitt, 2009).

It is important to briefly explore the differences between psychological safety and trust as the two concepts are often incorrectly used synonymously. Where psychological safety is often positioned as a team level construct, trust is positioned as an interpersonal, dyadic, and bi-directional leadership function (Edmondson, 2004; Frazier et al., 2017). Trust between individuals can exist even if psychological safety does not. However, because psychological safety is positioned as a group or team level construct, team members often have shared experiences and psychological safety can be damaged vicariously (Edmondson, 2004). For example, if a team member is ridiculed or humiliated for asking a question, that person, as well as all those who are present, will re-consider or think twice about asking a question in the future.

First, acknowledging that XX College has struggled with previous change initiatives, especially related to participatory decision making and including perspectives, inclusive

leadership may be supportive of organizational change going forward as it encourages employees to bring diverse approaches and solutions to advance change initiatives (Hirak et al., 2012; Ye et al., 2019). Inclusive leaders reinforce the value individual voices and actively seek out those with differing perspectives to participate in the change process (Mitchell & Boyle, 2020; Randel et al., 2018). So, encouraging voice is not only an inclusive leadership behaviour, but a function of organizational change within the context of this problem of practice. This change requires leaders at XX College to challenge the status quo, a key tenet of psychological safety (Kahn, 1990; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Thus, the connection between an inclusive leadership approach and change is two-fold within XX College; it will require leaders to practice and model the behaviours they are trying to encourage within their teams while also advancing this change by encouraging others to speak up.

Second, the relationship between change and trust is complex, especially when intending to advance change meant to create greater psychological safety. Inclusive leadership practice is supportive of encouraging trust within the change process as inclusive leaders manage the responsibility for outcomes, including failures within change initiatives (Hollander, 2012; Younas, 2020). This encourages employees and other leaders to participate and propel change forward without fearing negative consequences of doing so (Javed et al., 2019). This relationship is curiously positioned within the problem of practice. Trust appears critical in the change process, from an inclusive leadership perspective, however speaking up and participating in interpersonally risky behaviours are examples of employee/team practices when psychologically safe climates exist. Younas et al. (2020) suggest that behavioural integrity and trust in leadership is supportive of the relationship between inclusive leadership and organizational change. Yet, trust and psychological safety are two distinct concepts

(Edmondson, 2004). This may suggest that to create change at XX College, inclusive leadership practice could satisfy the need for trust in leadership and psychological safety could support risk taking within the change process.

Critical Race Theory and Change

First, to conceptualize organizational change through a critical race theory (CRT) lens, it requires leaders to address and acknowledge organizations as racial structures (Ray, 2019). Fundamentally, if organizational and change leaders cannot, or will not, recognize the impact of racialization in organizations, organizational change will serve to meet the needs of those with dominant identities (Vaught & Castagno, 2008). If change leaders at XX College are not intentional about exploring the intersection between structural racism and psychological safety, any efforts to create psychological safety will be designed to support those with dominant identities. To positively propel change, informed by CRT, organizational leaders must advance change with the understanding that Western organizational systems were partially built on “the expropriation and exclusion of racial others” (Ray, 2019, p. 29).

When disrupting or changing organizational systems and practices that were designed with the intent of excluding and/or exploiting others based on social or racial identity, change leaders must carefully consider the impacts on racialized community members. Hierarchical and interpersonal stability within organizations is often founded, or at least relies, on the perpetuation of racial order (Ray, 2019). Perhaps dangerously, many organizational leaders approach organizational or institutional racialization as “colour blindness”, believing that if change is led to the best of their ability, it will provide equal opportunity for all (Williams et al., 2016). This perspective is evident at XX College, observed through little racial diversity at higher leadership levels, continued conversations of “what about me” from those with non-marginalized identities,

and an unwillingness to acknowledge that some groups or communities require different resources in order to navigate systemic and structural barriers within organizations and institutions. The belief or perspective that colour blindness will mediate the relationship between organizational change and structural racism “reinforces the notion that racism is a personal – as opposed to systemic – issue” (Lopez, 2003, p. 69). Thus, racial order often goes unexamined and unquestioned, deepening the negative impacts and outcomes for racialized people.

The intersection between inclusive leadership practice, CRT, and change reveals the potential for tension within the change process. Inclusive leadership requires leaders to interrogate power structures with the explicit goal of deconstructing systemic barriers (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Joseph & Winston, 2005). Racial order, then, must be examined as a systemic issue if inclusive leaders are to authentically practice and embody the tenets of this leadership style. The transition from viewing racialization and exclusion as a personal issue, where one might internally absolve themselves of individual accountability, towards a collective leadership responsibility means that leaders can no longer claim that equity work is not part of their job.

Through the lens of CRT, then, to propel change at XX College will require change leaders to prepare for resistance and explore the underlying beliefs and assumptions of those across the organization. Privilege and power are unyielding invisible forces and educational change leaders are “frequently blindsided by the fierce opposition” that often arises when an equity lens is applied (Pollack & Zirkel, 2013, p. 291). Pollack and Zirkel (2013) also acknowledge that a CRT change lens interrogates the space between ideals and beliefs. They share that “peoples’ espoused values and ideals are often incongruent with their basic underlying beliefs and assumptions” (Pollack & Zirkel, 2013, p. 300). If organizational change, especially in the context of this problem of practice, can be reframed as existing within a racialized

institution, XX College may be able to propel change by unearthing underlying beliefs and assumptions to shift towards psychologically safe practice.

Queer Theory and Change

Queer theory offers insight into the way the XX College may propel equity-focused psychological safety-related change initiatives. A central tenet of queer theory, questioning the ways in which leaders and organizations understand social identities, directly connects to how the equity portion of this problem of practice may be conceptualized through a change lens (Moulin de Souza, 2017). Where CRT questions institutional structures that permit and encourage othering, queer theory serves to analyze the way in which power is distributed (Moulin de Souza, 2017). Indeed, CRT does also examine power imbalance and distribution. Queer theory is complementary to this perspective, extending the examination from questioning power control to power re-distribution by problematizing binary thinking.

Queer theory also offers unique insight into the problem of practice from a social identity perspective. Most individuals are socialized to categorize people into binaries; male and female, black and white, disabled and not disabled. A queer lens questioning this thinking. For example, while social paradigms may categorize gender as a false binary construct, queer theory acknowledges that gender identity and experiences of gender exist on a spectrum (Moulin de Souza, 2017).

From a queer stance, change within this problem of practice then must not only include the redistribution of power to advance organizational change, but encourage change agents and leaders to question what they perceive to be “normal”. One of the core and central tenets to inclusive leadership is active deconstruction of systems that encourage or permit inequitable power distribution to exist in the first place (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Practical leadership

approaches to support change within this problem of practice, especially from an inclusive leadership approach, could include collapsing previous structures to make way for new ways of being and ensuring power redistribution is included within change planning (Bizjak, 2017; Moulin de Souza, 2017).

Summary

Inclusive leadership as a leadership approach has interesting potential to advance this problem of practice via encouraging voice and speaking up behaviour as well as trust in the change process. The relationship between change and trust is complex, especially when the focus of change highlights and addresses systemic barriers and oppressive practices. This can be a vulnerable and intimidating experience for those participating within, or impacted by, the change process. Critical race theory and queer theory offer leaders guidance in how to conceptualize, acknowledge, and navigate resistance and tension within the change process by bringing power and power imbalances to the forefront. The intersections between these theories and leading organizational change are further explored in the next section.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

The relationship between psychological safety and organizational change is complex; having a psychologically safe environment is conducive to organizational change yet little research acknowledges the tension between organizational change efforts that seek to advance psychological safety (Edmondson et al., 2016; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). In response to this relational tension between the constructs of psychological safety and organizational change leadership, two key frameworks are explored in consideration of how XX College might answer the question “how to change?”.

First, Kotter's eight step model will be used as the model addresses both process-driven and people-driven actions (Mento et al., 2002). Kotter's model has been found to be effective in organizations that are trying to initiate change that is not enforced by structural external pressures such as legislation or policy (Chappell et al., 2016). XX College faces both internal and external social pressures related to equity and psychological safety, as described in chapter 1. While these pressures are motivations for change, legislation has not caught up to enforcing institutional policy requirements for advancing psychological safety, suggesting that Kotter's model may be an appropriate framework to guide the change process. In addition, literature reflects success in using this model within educational institutions and higher education settings (Applebaum et al., 2012).

Second, Bridges' transition model will be used to analyze the ways in which XX College may conceptualize and plan for the psychological experience of change. An awareness of how change is experienced by people within an organization, not how the organization changes, is the beginning of meaningful change processes (Brisson-Banks, 2010). Bridges' model offers the opportunity to conceptualize change through the lens of organizational positionality. The problem of practice, and change responsibilities, sit within the human resources department at XX College. It would be short-sighted to not consider the impact or intersection between human resource functions and change, especially through an equity lens. As Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) share "high-performing HR professionals make change happen successfully and thoroughly with their most critical contribution being to make sure the change happens quickly" (pp. FIND), linking the connection between departmental pressure, the psychological change experience, and change transitions within XX College.

Kotter's Eight Step Model

Step one of Kotter's eight-step model, establishing a sense of urgency, is both essential and critical to the success of change initiation at XX College. A call for change that is focused on leader capability around equity-focused psychological safety will be essential in creating collective urgency. By focusing the call for change on leadership action, leaders taking the role of change agents will develop the institutional credibility needed to successfully initiate change (Kotter, 1997). This is especially important at XX College as there is already a "not my job" mentality among some leaders with respect to equity-focused psychological safety.

Step two and three, creating a coalition and developing a vision for change, will be required to support the advancement of change at the organizational level (Kotter, 1995). Gathering key stakeholders, including senior administration, department leads, program heads, local union members, and affinity network representatives to co-develop a vision for change, where people of different backgrounds, identities, and social locations can see themselves and their needs reflected in the future vision, will be especially important in cultivating trust within the change coalition (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Establishing an interdisciplinary change coalition, with representation from across the XX College community, will strengthen the vision for change as the group-level nature of psychological safety suggests that organizational hierarchy has a negative impact on psychologically safe climates (Remtulla et al., 2021). Organizational hierarchies often stifle participatory decision-making processes as a result of positional power imbalances.

Step four, communicate the vision, requires critical reflection on the intersection between this change framework and the problem of practice. Communicating the change vision at XX College will require an intensive strategy as organizational communication of other strategic

change initiatives have not been well-supported in the past. Typical action includes memos or announcements from the senior management team with little scheduling, planning, or notice, leading some students and staff to feel that change is imposed rather than being discussed. The imposition of change is a key barrier to team-level psychological safety (Remtulla et al., 2021). Leveraging internal communication channels with consistency and regularity as well as implementing two-way communication channels are often effective strategies in reducing top-down communication (Applebaum et al., 2012). Two-way communication is a powerful change communication strategy and regular debriefs to promote open dialogue will be a supportive practice in advancing psychological safety initiatives (Kotter, 1996; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Bridges' transition model will be supportive at this stage of Kotter's model. In application, Bridges' transition model provides a broad framework for various communication elements during each of the phases (Rosenbaum et al., 2018).

In empowering teams and people to act and generating wins, steps five and six respectively, leveraging practices that allow and encourage co-design and participatory decision making will be critical to change success. Having members of the XX College community, with representation from different social locations and marginalized identities, will contribute to creating and identifying meaningful experiences and generate interventions/actions that contribute to psychological safety in an equitable way (Opie & Roberts, 2017). Positive change and partnership may be sustained by ensuring equitable opportunity to actively contribute and participate during the change process (Fine, 2017; Su, 2017).

Finally, using wins to create more change and sustaining the new culture, steps seven and eight, will require concentrated change leadership (Kotter, 1997). XX College has historically planned for early or quick wins in their change processes and have celebrated these wins to the

point of signaling to some leaders that change leadership is no longer required. Potential strategies to sustain change, such as leveraging the performance management process, will be critical in ensuring that change can be sustain beyond early wins (Offerman & Basford, 2014). Bridges' transition model may be complimentary in supporting XX College to truly sustain new culture.

Bridges' Transition Model

Bridges (1991) makes a clear distinction between change and transition, where change encompasses external, organizationally based action and transition is psychological, involving the emotions, responses, and actions of individuals. The distinction in Bridges' model, when compared to Kotter's model, is the greater focus on coping with change at the individual level (Leybourne, 2016). Bridges (2001) positions coping as transition and states that it relates to the way individuals move through the personal and psychological experience of change events. When considering the change history at XX College, as well as the problem of practice, Bridges' transition model offers insight into the way XX College may lead the College community through the difficult, unpleasant, and emotionally difficult feelings that arise when dominant perspectives and ways of being are challenged through the change process (Leybourne, 2016; Shore et al., 2018).

Somewhat paradoxically, Bridges "suggests that transition is a process that starts with an ending and ends with a beginning" (Leybourne, 2016, pp. 28). The first phase of the model begins with ending, where saying goodbye to the way things were and anger, sadness, and confusion may emerge at the individual level (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Leybourne, 2016). The relationship between emotions and change may be heightened within this problem of practice and could emerge as problematic; employees with marginalized identities may struggle if employees

with dominant identities appear angry or sad in response to change activities meant to create and equitable and safe environment for all.

The second phase, entering the neutral zone, is positioned as the very core of the transition process; space between what was and what will be (Bridges, 1991). Leveraging temporary support systems for employees, leaders, and students may help reframe and aid in navigating the “emotional wilderness” within this stage (Bridges, 1991; King, 2005). To disrupt systems and practices that were designed and built with the intention of excluding, othering, and/or exploiting others based on lived experience or social identity requires careful consideration in the context of organizational change. Social stability in organizations often reinforces social order, so shifting organizational ways of being to include different perspectives around equity and psychological safety is likely to be a challenging experience for some leaders (Ray, 2019). While some may argue that this will disrupt the psychological safety of those who do not experience marginalization, an equitable approach does not mean that anyone will lose or miss out. The shifts in thinking may feel temporarily uncomfortable or unfamiliar, but if you do already experience psychological safety because of your social location or privileges you have access to, increasing psychological safety for others does not automatically challenge or decrease your own.

The last phase, new beginnings, is “often when individuals lose all hope; they freeze and cannot move forward” (Brisson-Banks, 2010, pp. 247). Strategies to support change leaders in the process of unlearning and relearning as they question what types of power they hold and how power is used to control others may be supportive in moving past the initial challenge of losing hope in the change process (Leybourne, 2016; Squire, 2016). To support ongoing change,

leaders will be required to critically appraise their positionality and commit to ongoing unlearning and re-learning (Shore et al., 2011).

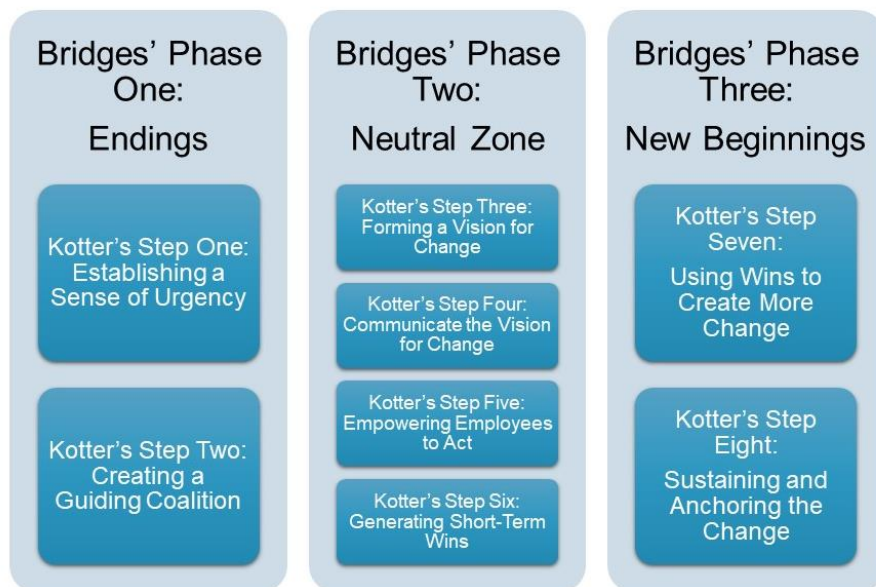
Summary of the Intersection Between Bridges' and Kotter's Models

The purpose and goal of leveraging two change frameworks is to address distinct and unique components of this problem of practice. The goal of this OIP is to create equity-focused psychologically safe environments, which includes different types of change. There are process and structural changes as well as leadership behaviour, attitudinal, and practice changes.

Bridges' model supports the interpersonal, psychological reorientation required to embed an equity lens into day-to-day work and Kotter's model supports the advancement of process driven actions (Mento et al., 2002). To conceptualize the intersection of these models, Bridges' model can be thought of as the foundational, overarching approach to change with Kotter's steps embedded within each of Bridges' phases. Figure 1 visually depicts this intersection.

Figure 1

Intersecting Bridges' and Kotter's Models



Critical Organizational Analysis

To ensure change initiatives are aligned with gaps that exist within XX College, the Nadler-Tushman congruence model will be used to answer the question “what to change?” (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The congruence model is a tool that supports the identification of symptoms of the problem, determining gaps between inputs and outputs, and explore the fit between these components (Sabir, 2018). Core to model is the concept of congruence, defined as “the degree to which the needs, demands, goals, objectives, and/or structures of one component are consistent with the needs, demands, goals, objectives, and/or structures of another component” (Nadler & Tushman, 1980, p. 45). The congruence model is a rational and fitting selection for this problem of practice as it acknowledges that every organization exists within the context of a larger environment, and larger social forces, that have a significant impact on how the organization functions and performs (Nadler & Tushman, 1980).

This model focuses on the dynamics of what happens within organizations when change is implemented (Muema Musyoka et al., 2020). Analyzing change dynamics, in pursuit of identifying what needs to change within XX College, is important for this problem of practice because of the levels of uncertainty, fear, and hesitancy within XX College leaders. Leaders within the organization who do recognize they have the potential to create psychological safety have shared that they are afraid to act as they fear they may do more harm in the pursuit of doing good. This may suggest that some leaders are aware of the gap between intent and impact.

Muema Musoka et al. (2020) encourage the use of metaphors in change management, suggesting that this model, as well as some other theories of change, often position organizations as machines, organism, and/or as political systems. The systems approach of the congruence model aligns with the systemic nature of the problem of practice, as discussed in chapter one.

These authors also offer that the Nadler-Tushman model position organizations as organisms and political systems; living and adapting systems with parallels to systems of political rule, influence, and power (Muema Musyoka et al., 2020). Indeed, XX College functions within that description, constantly changing, growing, and evolving, especially in relation to external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other social justice events below.

Acknowledging the impact of external drivers for change, noted in an earlier section, the Nadler-Tushman congruence model provides a “conceptual scheme that describes an organization and its relationship to its external environment” (Deszca et al., 2020, pp.72). This integration and assessment of the external environment is exceptionally important for this problem of practice as the current social climate has influenced, both nationally and internationally, the acceleration of organizational focus on inclusion and systemic inequity. Recognizing the context of the larger environment and the social forces that have a powerful impact on how organizations perform, and change offers critical insight into the ways that organization may identify gaps in their organizational analysis (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The recent murders of Philandro Castille, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and tragically, many others, unequivocally demand the deep examination of the ways in which social environments and climates impact the change process.

Gap Analysis: Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model

In applying the congruence model, a key symptom of the problem is the absence of an institutional approach or strategy, especially considering the public organizational commitments that XX College has made to the broader campus community. XX College, beyond organizational declarations of a commitment to change, has no approach suggesting how the institution may advance equity-focused psychological safety. The development of equity-

focused psychologically safe climates are not accidental or passive processes; they require active, intentional, and consistent action by leaders (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Strategy is considered an input within the congruence model and the absence of strategy may reveal the reason for XX College's lack of success thus far; through the lens of the model, strategy is the single most important input into the organization (Sabir, 2018).

Key problems are found within discrepancies between actual and expected organizational performance (Nadler and Tushman, 1980). As per the strategic plan and mission, vision, and values of XX College, expected organizational performance would reflect participatory decision making, intentional inclusive leadership practice, restorative HR processes, and an inclusion and equity informed succession planning program. Inclusive leadership principles and behaviours would guide and support the advancement of these initiatives and improve experiences of marginalized people in the organization (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Current internal data reflects inconsistent or undocumented processes, no succession plan, an absence of participatory decision making, and no plans for leadership development.

As it relates to the problem of practice, the "formal organization" is comprised of tangible artifacts; HR systems including recruitment and performance, measurement systems including a corporate balanced scorecard, and information systems including technology that supports employee issue identification and reporting (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The "work" is less visible as the organization is early in its inclusion and equity journey; commitments from senior leaders have been made but no units, departments, or positions exist to support the implementation of any strategic activities. Independently, the creation of my role is to serve as the internal resource. While this may be positioned as an internal change driver, XX College has made little investment in truly advancing equity and psychological safety.

In analyzing the level of congruence/fit, within XX College, the components of the organization do fit well together and there is significant potential for high levels of congruence/fit if intentional and specific action is taken. The mechanisms within the formal organization are clear, and in some cases, standardized, where people within XX College can move fluidly throughout processes. Some areas of policy are robust and supported by extensive procedural practices. There is good understanding of how these systems interact with one another, even if staff have worked in other organizations; most post-secondary systems are set up similarly with minor differences in organization specific policy.

There is lack of congruence, however, with respect to the problem of practice; disconnection currently exists between the informal organization and the people within it. The current state of the organization, as it relates to this problem of practice likely exists because of the lack of focus and attention given to inclusion and equity as it relates to experiences of systemic inequity (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Shore et al., 2018). Only recently has senior leadership begun to consider the experiences of racism and discrimination in the organization and while initial work and activity is underway, no action has been taken. This speaks to the poor congruence between the informal organization and the people; it would be unrealistic to expect people to change behaviour without creating the space and culture for change to occur (Cottrill et al., 2014; Nadler & Tushman, 1980).

Answering the Question: What to Change?

In summary, the past seven steps within the congruence model indicate significant and measurable change. First, an assessment of congruence indicates poor fit between the informal organization and people. This lack of fit has the potential to block successful and effective change if not appropriately addressed, given the sensitive, emotional, and traumatic experiences

that marginalized people can have within organizations that do not intentionally address systemic inequity. Encouraging marginalized and vulnerable people to enter spaces under the auspices of inclusion, but not yet transformed to offer safety, trust, and belongingness is negligent, harmful, and destructive (Fine, 2017). XX College must actively cultivate inclusive organizational culture and climate to support the integration and advancement of inclusive leadership practice in the organization. Attention to inclusive culture is well supported in the literature and is often viewed as a critical component in the adoption of inclusive leadership practice and psychologically safe environments (Randel et al., 2018, Shore et al., 2011).

Second, in performing a critical organizational analysis, it is evident that the role of leadership plays a significant part in closing the gap between current state and envisioned future state at XX College. Literature clearly describes the connection between leadership practice and psychological safety and extends the relationship between inclusive leadership behaviours and equity-focused practice (Cottrill et al., 2014; Shore et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2013; Randel et al., 2018). This analysis reveals the impact that the absence of focused leadership development has had on this problem of practice and XX College may need to be willing to take on a paradigmatic shift in how leadership development and practice is positioned within the institution.

The root of this shift or re-conceptualization at XX College aims to center the role of leadership behaviour in perpetuating power and privilege. The current lack of acknowledgement in XX College as it relates to experiences of power and privilege only serve in the solidification of the myth that hard work, ingenuity, skill, ability, and intelligence are the root of successful leadership (Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Zane, 2007). If the organization hopes to propel psychological safety forward, recognizing that systemic inequity in the workplace is perpetuated by the unequal distribution of power and inability for some to access the same opportunities must

be included under what needs to change (Bryant et al., 2011). Without this shift, the continued incongruence between actual and expected organizational performance (Nadler and Tushman, 1980).

There are unique connections between the first and second areas of change. If the re-conceptualization of leadership as a social construct is to support the implementation of inclusive leadership practice to improve follower experiences of psychological safety, it is critical to address the ways in which a social constructivist approach can problematize privilege (Geiger & Jordan, 2014). If not carefully considered, conversations on power and privilege in leadership can frame the dominant group as problematic. While some leadership behaviours are, indeed, problematic, this view can prioritize the feelings of the dominant group over focusing on the experiences of those who have been marginalized or oppressed (Geiger & Jordan, 2014). Thus, integrating a strategic approach or building a strategy document to advance leadership development may support XX College administrators in balancing the tension between these two areas of change.

Finally, the autocratic, top-down decision process of XX College must change to create psychologically safe environments. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) are clear; psychologically safe team environments thrive when participatory decision-making processes are implemented. To expect sustainable change, the voices of marginalized people must be centered in the decision-making process. This organizational analysis and evaluation of the current state clearly demonstrates the wide chasm between existing practice and future vision, with defined priorities for what XX College needs to change to propel this problem of practice forward.

Summary

In applying the Nadler-Tushman congruence model to this problem of practice, key discrepancies or gaps emerge between actual and expected organizational performance. The strategic plan of XX College outlines a vision of anticipated performance and leadership behaviour, yet internal analysis reflects inconsistent practices, an absence of participatory decision making, and no leadership development plans. This analysis yields clear direction in terms of what to change within XX College including a shift in how leadership development is conceptualized, developing a strategic approach to advance leadership development, and a re-alignment of decision-making processes to reflect participatory practices.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

This OIP aims to address how XX College can cultivate and create equity-focused psychological safe climates for all members of the campus community. This organizational vision is the primary objective of the potential solutions, proposed below, to address this problem of practice. In the following section, three proposed solutions will be explored as well as a brief examination on the status quo. The status quo is not positioned as a possible solution, but it does warrant critical analysis as there are significant impacts to the change process.

Maintaining the Status Quo

As noted, maintaining the status quo is not offered as a solution to this problem of practice. Earlier in this chapter, it was noted that equity-focused psychologically safe climates cannot and do not happen accidentally, but rather, they result from intentional, consistent, and active effort and leadership action (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Thus, if the aim of this problem of practice is to identify strategies to create equity-focused psychologically safe climates,

maintaining the status quo cannot be positioned as a solution. Arguably, maintaining the status quo is part of the problem.

The status quo does, however, offer insight into how possible solutions to address the problem of practice may be received within XX College. When attempting to change socio-political structures within social institutions, such as education systems, the current state often offers insight into the ways in which dominant perspectives and practices will try to maintain social control and power (Hasford, 2016). The lack of coordinated, planned, and carefully considered organizational action thus far may suggest that the status quo is pervasive and deeply entrenched. This is distinct from change readiness; the deeply rooted ways of being do not signal an unwillingness or unreadiness to change but do suggest that the status quo may actively challenge the advancement of possible solutions to this problem (Weiner, 2009). Institutionally, an unwillingness to recognize or acknowledge the existence of organizationally support inequity, even if unintentional, the denial of racism, and the portrayal of non-whiteness from a deficit perspective are some ways in which the status quo asserts dominance, power, and normativity (Opie & Roberts, 2017). The solutions discussed below should be considered and contextualized through this lens.

Solution One: Create and Implement an Inclusive Leadership Development Program

The first proposed solution is the creation and implementation of an inclusive leadership development program at XX College. While this may seem obvious or simplistic, it is a complex solution within the context of the organization as XX College has never focused on leadership development, had a leadership development program, or considered the ways in which leaders impact experiences of psychological safety. As Marques (2020, pp. 3) notes, “the practice of

inclusive leadership is not a luxury, and in fact not even an option anymore; it is a requirement for any leader who wants to succeed in taking his or her organization to greater heights.”

Recognizing the unique and intrinsic connection between inclusive leadership, equity, and psychological safety makes this a powerful organizational solution. Leaders play the most critical role in creating psychological safety within organizations (Edmondson et al., 2016; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Frazier et al., 2017). Further, Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) hypothesize that leader inclusiveness predicts psychological safety. Carmeli et al. (2010) support this hypothesis as they found that when leaders exhibit inclusive behaviours, the psychological safety of their followers improved.

Inclusive leadership also brings in an equity lens, examining leadership behaviours and functions with the goal of dismantling and de-constructing organizational systems and practices that strengthen and maintain the oppression of marginalized people (Merlini et al., 2019). Adopting inclusive leadership as a model for leadership development within XX College would create the environment where organizational leaders, administrators, academic leaders, and decision makers are equipped with the skills, abilities, and practices to challenge, acknowledge, and act on observations and experiences of inequity in the moment (Ferdman, 2020). This solution tackles one of the most critical components of this problem; the role that leadership has in perpetuating systemic inequity and the complicit behaviour of leaders when inequity is observed.

Ultimately, this solution positions an inclusive leadership development program as a precursor to behaviour change. This solution, however, does not assume that knowing better or providing leaders with information to improve or change their leadership practice will yield meaningful and observable behaviour change. Rather, findings within the critical organizational

analysis suggest that there is poor congruence between the informal organization and the leaders within it. The absence of leadership development and expectation has contributed to this problem, and it would be unrealistic to expect behavior change to be possible without first establishing what the expected behaviours are and supporting leaders to develop those qualities (Cottrill et al., 2014). This solution is positioned as a precursor to broader institutional change by first equipping leaders with the skills and abilities to practice inclusive leadership.

Solution Two: Develop an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Psychological Safety Strategy

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) strategies are becoming routine practice and are often central to discussions on how to address and challenge systemic inequity within organizations (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012). As such, implementing an EDI and psychological safety strategy is proposed as the second possible solution to this problem of practice. EDI strategies are core to equity initiatives, aiming to define a vision of inclusion and outline which best practice interventions senior leadership will champion and advance (Holvino et al., 2004). Martins (2020) positions these types of strategies as important elements of strategic equity and inclusion leadership and offers that this type of intervention creates space for senior leaders to be held accountable to commitments made within change initiatives. When these strategies are done well, they do not add additional layers of policy, red-tape, and bureaucracy. Rather, they aim to integrate strategic change actions and remove barriers that already exist (Frost, 2014).

This solution is supported by findings within the critical organization analysis. In assessing congruence, strategy is considered an input and had been positioned within the literature as the single most important input within an organization (Sabir, 2018). XX College does not have a strategy to support advancement of this problem, leading to inconsistent action, poor resource planning, and little advancement of initiatives that align with psychological safety.

Given the importance and impact of organizational strategy, as defined by Sabir (2018), it would be reasonable to position the development of an EDI and psychological safety as a potential solution to this problem.

Solution Three: Reconceptualize Human Resource Systems with an Equity Lens

In pursuing equity-focused psychologically safe climates, it is essential to acknowledge that existing inequity within institutions is heavily perpetuated by the unequal distribution of resources, power, and the inability to access the same opportunities (Bryant et al., 2011). In workplaces, the ability to distribute power and access to opportunity is often found within human resource departments; recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, and termination are all human resource functions that impact marginalized employees differently (Kutch, 2017; Sparkman, 2019). This oversight extends beyond employee experience and has the potential to impact students as well as the broader campus community. Whoever is recruited, selected, and onboarded into the organization, particularly new leaders, will be guided by the human resources department.

Human resource systems are uniquely positioned to create equitable and psychologically safe experiences given that the department guides and dictates the employee lifecycle (Kutch, 2017). By reconceptualizing and re-envisioning human resource systems and practices with an equity lens, there is opportunity to positively create and impact psychological safety of those across the XX College community (Cottrill et al., 2014; Shore et al., 2018; Randel et al., 2018). This solution would involve extensive work as XX College has a well-documented history of poor human resource practices. Predecessors in the department have perpetuated inequitable policies, made top-down decisions, and eroded trust between the department and long-standing employees. A reconceptualization, though supported as an effective intervention, would involve

deconstructing most, if not all, functional areas of human resources including talent management, leadership development, compensation, health and safety, and labour relations.

Resources Needed

Several different resources must be considered in the selection and implementation of a solution for this problem of practice. Within the organization context of XX College, the primary resource categories include financial, time, human, system/structural, and technological. For the purposes of this problem of practice, system/structural resources would include intersections with other community groups, College partnerships, and relationships as well as system or corporate level input. Resources can be described as low or having not much impact, medium or requiring some resources/having some impact, or high and requiring significant resources/having significant impact. For XX College, low or medium impact could be managed with existing internal resources and/or with the re-prioritization of existing resources. High impact would require additional resources that may require special approval and/or need to be planned for in a future annual business plan or annual budget. Table 1 provides a visual representation of resource impact for each proposed solution.

Table 1

Overview of Resources Needed for Proposed Solutions

Resource Needed	Solution One: Leadership Development	Solution Two: EDI Strategy	Solution Three: HR Systems
Financial	Medium	Low	High
Time	Medium	High	Medium
Human	High	Medium	High
System/Structural	Low	Medium	High
Technological	Low	Medium	Medium

Resources Needed – Solution One

The resources required to implement this solution are varied and exist on a continuum. Within XX College, financial and human resources are the primary considerations for leadership development. Human resources to support the coordination, development, and implementation of the program would be required and are proposed to have high impact. There are few existing internal human resources that could support the implementation of this solution. Financial resources emerge as a key consideration within this solution. As noted by Solansky (2010), a leadership skills assessment and leadership mentoring are two key leadership development program components. XX College does not have dedicated financial resources to support the administration of leadership skills assessments, such as the intercultural development inventory, and limits formal leadership mentoring or coaching to senior management team executives. To fully implement this solution, XX College would need to invest financial resources in leadership assessment and mentoring for all 100+ leaders and allocate human resources to develop the structure and content of the leadership development program, ensuring it is contextualized to the desired future state.

Resources Needed – Solution Two

The resources needed to develop an EDI and psychological safety strategy are higher when compared to the first solution. While some organizations may require or choose to engage external consultants, resulting in the need for financial resources, the development of a strategy could be managed with existing resources as XX College has institutional research and project management experience and support. Time and human resources emerge as resource priorities. Engaging staff, students, and the broader campus community in engagement and outreach to ensure a participatory approach is used to inform the development of the strategy will take

dedicated time and people to perform the work. Additional financial, and potentially human, resources may be required to implement and advance the activities detailed within the strategy with some technological resources required for specific initiatives.

Resources Needed – Solution Three

Time, financial, system/structural and human resources emerge as key needs to advance this solution. The extensive nature of human resource functions would suggest that this solution will be an iterative process, lasting multiple fiscal cycles. Given the history of mistrust within XX College related to human resource reviews, an external review should be considered, requiring financial resources. It is also expected that unanticipated resource needs would emerge from this solution. XX College has never engaged in a full department review and unexpected findings or needed structural changes could result in additional technological, informational, legal, or environmental resources to support full implementation of this possible solution.

Relationship Between Possible Solutions and Implications

All three possible solutions work towards solving different pieces of this problem of practice. Table 2 outlines a comparison of possible solutions to contextualize similarities and differences in support of deeper exploration. Specifically, solution one and solution two are complementary. Rolling out an inclusive leadership development program could be considered a strategic solution or an activity that you might expect to find within a broader equity related strategy. Integrating leadership development as part of a strategic approach to equity-informed psychological safety may present an interesting opportunity for XX College to re-position how strategy is built and apply an equity lens to strategic development and decision-making.

Inclusive leadership development opportunities may provide decision makers with the

knowledge, skills, and abilities to apply equity principles more comprehensively and appropriately to equity and non-equity related strategy and policy.

Table 2

Comparison of Possible Solutions

Possible Solutions	Solution One: Leadership Development	Solution Two: EDI Strategy	Solution Three: HR Systems
Similarities	Focus on deconstructing power and privilege systems, centering the experience of marginalized communities in decision-making, applying an equity lens to all activities, and consider the impact of the status quo in advancing change.		
Differences	Developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of leaders, focusing on the role of leadership in psychological safety, team-based approach, direct impact to whole organization	High level approach, focusing on organization and/or corporate level work, aligns with senior leadership priorities, indirect impact to whole organization, non-teams-based approach	Department-level focus, strongly connected to specific policies and procedures, resource intensive, action oriented, longer time frame

The relationship between the first and third proposed solutions are also particularly notable. Integrating inclusive leadership as a model for leadership development and reconceptualizing human resource systems with an equity lens addresses the problem from two parallel approaches; one focused on examining the ways in which leadership has the potential to encourage and create space for equity-informed psychological safety while the other focuses on organizational human resource processes that impact equity and psychological safety at a systems level (Martins, 2020). When these two solutions are combined, or principles from both are integrated, there is a unique opportunity to develop inclusive human resource leaders, an area often overlooked in human resource development (Sparkman, 2019).

To understand the implications of the relationship between these two solutions requires a reflection on the history between human resource development and equity. Many early equity and inclusion initiatives stemmed from the civil rights movement and human resource departments focused on affirmative action programs and policies that met legal compliance (Offerman & Basford, 2014). Human resource functions, such as those meant to develop awareness or sensitivity, were designed to avoid litigation (Chavez & Weisinger, 2008). Most EDI, and some psychological safety, programs that were positioned as interventions to combat inequity were viewed as risk-mitigation functions meant to protect the organization rather than support marginalized and/or minority populations (Offerman & Basford, 2014).

At XX College, leadership development is resourced by the human resources department. Implications of the relationship between the first and third possible solutions, then, are complex, layered, and dynamic. The extensive and comprehensive nature of reconceptualizing human resources through an equity lens might be supportive of leadership development to advance psychological safety but miss the needed leadership focus considering all other human resource functions (Sparkman, 2019). Advancing inclusive leadership development without reconceptualizing human resources with an equity lens, especially if the development program is co-developed by those who already hold power and privilege. Decision makers who belong to a dominant group are often focused on ensuring their performance is politically correct, reinforcing bias and prejudice rather than combatting it through action (Rose, 1996).

Recommended Solution: Create and Implement an Inclusive Leadership Development Program, Supplemented by an EDI Strategy

Creating and implementing an inclusive leadership development program at XX College, supported by a broader EDI strategy is the recommended solution. This blends some of the approaches within solutions one and two. Inclusive leadership development is recommended as

a starting place for XX College, with the intention to create and implement an EDI strategy soon after. While the third solution is important and should still be considered for implementation, the first solution will create a stronger organizational foundation for additional changes to be better supported across the XX College community. Starting with inclusive leadership development is recommended specifically because of the role and positioning that both academic and administrative leaders have within XX College and the opportunity for leaders to strategically advance equity-focused psychological safety.

Organizational policies, practices, and strategies do play a critical role in organizational change, though it is typically a leadership role or function to guide the ways in which those behaviours and practices are cultivated, encouraged, and interpreted (Ferdman, 2014). Advancing psychological safety through strategy and human resource processes, solutions two and three, may be effective, but it is leaders who implement those strategies, policies, and changes. Inclusive environments, where solutions two and three may be more successful, are often the product of leaders demonstrating and practicing inclusive leadership behaviours (Davidson, 2020). Given the varied success of XX College in advancing other equity-related or equity-adjacent change initiatives, based on Davidson's (2020) assessment of the relationship between inclusive leadership and inclusive environments, it may be reasonable to assume that the absence of inclusive leadership practice has contributed to the poor integration of previous change activities. Thus, starting with inclusive leadership development is positioned as the recommended solution.

PDSA Cycles to Support the Improvement Process

The PDSA cycle has been selected to support the improvement process and implementation plan for this problem of practice. Identified by the four key stages, plan, do,

study, act, PDSA cycles offer key insight into monitoring change management processes (Crowfoot & Prasad, 2017). PDSA cycles are central in quality improvement initiatives and are particularly valuable in minimizing resistance to change (Crowfoot & Prasad, 2017). Given that this problem of practice is expected to experience uncertainty among leaders and organizational/institutional resistance through challenging dominant narratives and power structures that aim to uphold the status quo, PDSA cycles are an appropriate fit (Randel et al., 2018). Though PDSA cycles are often referenced in quality improvement interventions, this cycle serves as an important and useful framework for measuring and monitoring change (Leis & Shojania, 2017). In addition, PDSA cycles support the development of knowledge and learning in team settings, a critical element for the implementation of an inclusive leadership development program to support equitable leadership practice (Christoff, 2018).

Further, PDSA cycles parallel Kotter's eight step model, the selected change framework, and the two frameworks operate in complementary ways (Amin & Survey, 2018). Kotter's model helps to support smaller, incremental changes, particularly when the change vision is complex and challenging (Kotter, 1995). As described above, the many angles to which this problem could be addressed signals complexity. In Kotter's seminal work on exploring why change transformations fail, he notes that encouraging risk taking, trying new ideas, and developing the means to ensure leader success are critical to change success (Kotter, 1995). This relates to the planned change in addressing this problem of practice; requiring leaders to try new ways of leading and engaging and creating equity-focused psychologically safe environments for interpersonal risk taking. PDSA cycles integrate nicely into key steps within Kotter's model, allowing the organization to be agile and nimble in the implementation of change activities. Application of PDSA cycles will be further explored in Chapter 3.

Summary

This section explores possible solutions to address the problem of practice. Of the solutions explored, all focus on deconstructing power and privilege systems and apply an equity lens to change activities; important components in challenging the status quo. All solutions are also considered viable options both with respect to resources required, appetite within the organization, and connection to advancing the problem of practice. Creating an inclusive leadership development program is selected as the recommended solution given the unique role and impact leaders have on creating psychologically safe environments. Change planning for this solution is explored in Chapter 3.

Leadership Ethics, Equity, Social Justice, and Decolonization: Challenges in Organizational Change

As briefly described in Chapter 1, social justice, ethics, equity, and decolonization play significant roles within broader organizational change. The social justice factors of this problem of practice have been explored from a leadership perspective. Inclusive leadership practice is positioned within the literature as being positively associated with social justice efforts by aiming to conceptualize the relationship between leadership and intergroup differences (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). The very nature of this problem, particularly applying an equity lens to psychological safety, blends the concepts of inclusion, equity, justice, and safety. This aligns with a social justice lens on inclusion, suggesting that inclusion exists when “people of all social identity groups have the opportunity to be present, have their voices heard and appreciated, and to engage in activities on behalf of the collective.” (Wasserman et al., 2008, pp. 176).

There are additional responsibilities of XX College, however, that must be explored and addressed, particularly within the context of organizational change leadership, planning, and implementation. Leadership, especially inclusive leadership, comes with deep social justice and

ethical responsibility. If leaders are to be equipped with the skills, practices, and behaviours to create equity-informed psychologically safe climates for their teams, colleagues, and students, they also can actively choose not to embody those behaviours and/or create environments of psychological unsafety. The complex nature of this duality requires ethical examination.

Decolonization within Post-Secondary Institutions

Decolonization within post-secondary institutions has a varied history, rife with challenges. Within XX College, decolonization and Indigenization has been advanced outside of other equity-focused initiatives. Like other institutions, attempts to advance reconciliation through integrating and adopting education-specific calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation Report have been met with varied success. This problem of practice aims to embed principles of decolonization such as challenging the social, political, and psychological constructions of socio-political institutions, sharing and re-distributing power and access, and questioning systems of superiority and inferiority (Fay, 2018; Schmidt, 2019).

Ethical Lens on Leadership and Psychological Safety

XX College recognizes, and loosely acknowledges, this ethical imperative although there is little confidence within senior leadership on how to navigate the demands and needs of different groups or communities. Some hesitancy to implementing or advancing organizational change is related to the fear and/or anticipation that propelling some equity initiatives forward will result in numerous echoes of “what about me?” across the campus community. This ethical opportunity is clearly described by Gotsis and Grimani (2016), where the authors share that “an inclusive leader attenuates status and power differentials to which vulnerable groups are subject: through respectful treatment, diverse employees experience a psychological safety climate that helps them feel that potential threats to their work-related identities are eliminated, thus being

intrinsically motivated to bring their genuine selves to the work team” (pp. 989). This ethical opportunity is also mirrored within the problem of practice; an inclusive leader needs to be willing to explore and examine the unique needs of vulnerable communities, the very purpose of applying an equity lens to psychological safety. The ethical consideration that emerges is, that by attenuating status/power differentials, the ability to create safety/unsafety becomes a leadership choice.

The intersection and positioning of inclusive leadership and equity-focused psychological safety, then, presents tension. Literature frames this tension as opportunity (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). However, in contrast and in experience, leaders within XX College describe it as being problematic and risky. Evidence would suggest and support the intentional use of inclusive leadership practice as intervention to create or support a psychologically safe environment, as described in the recommended solution (Edmondson et al., 2016; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Ferdman, 2020; Frazier et al., 2017). However, there is little research to support leaders in navigating the strain in acknowledging that the ability to include/exclude or create safety/unsafety is a form of inequity and power.

Even in the absence of extensive literature, a clear responsibility for XX College emerges. If inclusive leadership development is advanced as a solution, the positioning of this change is critical. While leaders may have the ability to choose their own leadership behaviour, XX College is responsible for setting leadership expectations and performance. Models of anticipatory justice and ethical leadership across organizational levels are used to define and address the ethical responsibilities of XX College within the context of broader organizational change.

Ethical Responsibilities: Anticipatory Justice and Macro-Level Ethical Leadership

Identifying the ethical responsibilities of XX College has implications for change implementation planning. These responsibilities differ from change priorities and change drivers and sit on the periphery of the problem of practice. As the problem of practice explicitly explores the need for equity-informed practice, an ethical lens offers complementary views to the institutional actions and responsibilities required to ensure that planned organizational change is ethically positioned and advanced.

Anticipatory Justice

Anticipatory justice offers insight into the ways employees may cope with unfamiliar or uncertain changes within organizations. Anticipatory justice, as defined by Rodell and Colquitt (2009), is the expectation that an individual holds regarding whether they will or will not experience justice in a future event, typically a planned change. Importantly, anticipatory justice impacts reactions to change (Bell et al., 2006; Rodell & Colquitt, 2009). Higher levels of anticipatory justice are associated with less resistance to change and higher levels of commitment to the organization (Shapiro & Kirkman, 1999).

Within this problem of practice, and more specifically, within the recommended solution, it would be reasonable to expect that leaders may experience apprehension, uncertainty, and unfamiliarity with new expectations that are set for leadership practice and behaviour. While XX College cannot directly control whether a leader chooses to embody and practice inclusive leadership, they can create an environment where those behaviours are encouraged, created, and cultivated. Arguably, there is an ethical organizational responsibility to create and communicate those expectations. If anticipatory justice is not perceived, meaning leaders within XX College do not feel that they will be treated fairly and respectfully, implementation of the recommended

solution may be compromised (Rodell & Colquitt, 2009). Through the lens of anticipatory justice, if XX College wants to ensure that leaders are equipped to create equity-informed psychologically safe climates, then the organization has an ethical responsibility to act in ensuring that leaders who will participate in the intervention believe that they will be treated fairly and justly.

Macro-Level Ethical Leadership Approaches

Macro-level ethical leadership examines and raises the essential role of ethics in the broader organizational enterprise (Carter & Donohue, 2012). Ethics at the macro or enterprise level emphasize social responsibility as well as strategic ethical approaches and embodies a whole person approach to organizational change (Carter & Donohue, 2012). A macro-level lens at the organization level also offers a different perspective on ethical conduct, an essential factor in advancing the proposed recommended solution within this problem of practice. Ethics and ethical practice within organizational settings often focuses on individual leadership responsibility, sometimes framed as ethical leadership behaviour (Schaubroeck et al., 2012). A multi-level model, beginning with a macro level approach, acknowledges the institutional ethical responsibility of XX College.

Schaubroeck et al. (2012) posit that organizations have an ethical responsibility to not only influence ethical conduct, but also influence and embed shared understandings of expected ethical behaviour or ethical practice. From this perspective, much ethical responsibility lies with the senior administrators within XX College, suggesting that there is institutional responsibility to create and advance ethically informed expectations within this problem of practice. At the macro-level, responsibilities or actions could and/or would include establishing patterns of

shared understanding related to ethical conduct, reflect norms and standards, and apply rewards or sanctions to desirable or undesirable behaviour (Schaubroeck et al., 2012).

Summary

This section identifies unique and important ethical imperatives within this problem of practice; inclusive leadership practice naturally brings an equity and social justice lens to leadership and change work, yet XX College cannot directly control whether a leader chooses to practice inclusive leadership behaviours. There is a responsibility, however, for the College to focus on creating environments, systems, and structures that support, encourage, and expect these behaviours. This has implications for change implementation, further discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Chapter 2 positions inclusive leadership as the selected leadership approach to change. Kotter's (1996) eight-step change model and Bridges' transition model are selected to guide and lead the change process within XX College. The organizational analysis identifies three possible solutions to address the PoP: (a) create and implement an inclusive leadership development program; (b) develop an equity, diversity, and inclusion and psychological safety strategy; and (c) reconceptualize human resource systems with an equity lens. The creation and implementation of an inclusive leadership development program is the recommended solution. Ethical and social justice issues were explored, revealing opportunities to explore ethical tension and anticipatory justice within XX College. Chapter 3 will expand on the recommended solution via change planning and change communication strategies.

Chapter 3 Introduction

Chapter 3 begins with a detailed change implementation plan, identifying how the proposed solution to the problem of practice, as experienced by XX College, may be advanced in pursuit of broader organizational improvement. Kotter's eight step model will guide change implementation, supported by Bridges' transition model to outline how leaders and administrators at XX College can advance inclusive leadership practice as a means to create equity-focused psychologically safe environments. Implementation goals, challenges, and limitations will be explored. Part of successful change implementation is a clear focus on the change vision and ensuring that changes are implemented in ways that the organization and leaders can integrate them into their work and practice (Battilana et al., 2010). While the recommended solution is composed of multiple change initiatives, for purposes of scope and ensuring the change activities are manageable, this change implementation plan focuses on implementation of the inclusive leadership development program. Appendix A provides an overview of the leadership development components. The program will be designed internally and co-developed in consultation with change agents and leaders. Measurement and evaluation strategies will be explored as well as change communication planning.

Change Implementation Plan

As explored in Chapter 1, XX College has an overarching goal of improving inclusion and collaboration as guided by their strategic plan (XX College, 2019). The overarching goal for this change initiative is to advance inclusion by equipping leaders with the skills, knowledge, and abilities to create equity-focused psychological safety climates. The change implementation plan to achieve this goal is informed by Kotter's eight step model and Bridges' transition model, broken into three primary change phases.

The goals of this implementation plan can be distilled into short-, medium-, and long-term goals. The short-term goal of this plan is to validate the call for change, establish a guiding change coalition, and begin to socialize and normalize the vision for change. Broader organizational communications across XX College have alluded to upcoming organizational action on equity, inclusion, and psychological safety priorities and raising awareness of the connection between equity and leadership will be critical in implementing all change activities. These short-term actions, leading to short-term outcomes, are expected to take a minimum of three months.

Within the subsequent six months of this change process, administrators, leaders, and other stakeholders will engage in change transition and focus on the core of leadership development skills building. The mid-term goal is to launch the first iteration of the inclusive development program, ensuring that participants can make a connection between the change vision and their own leadership responsibilities, ultimately leading to long-term behaviour change. The long-term goal involves members of the XX College community experiencing equity-focused psychologically safe climates and leaders feeling competent and confident in their ability to create those environments.

Using Kotter's Eight Step Model and Bridges' Transition Model

As outlined in Chapter 2, an inclusive leadership development program that is supported by institutional policy and strategy is positioned as the recommended solution. The broader change plan is broken into three primary phases that merge Kotter's eight step model and Bridges' transition model. Where Bridges' transition model is already captured in three phases, Kotter offers a specific recommendation for how the eight steps are phased. The first phase includes steps one through three as is referenced as "creating a climate for change", the second

phase consists of steps four through six and is known as “engaging and enabling the whole organization”, and the third phase, known as “implementing and sustaining the change” covers steps seven and eight (Campbell, 2008, pp. 23). Table 3 describes the proposed implementation activities, overlaid with evaluation activities which are described in subsequent sections. Appendix B provides a comprehensive description of change implementation strategies and complementary activities.

Table 3

Change Implementation Activities and Strategies

Activities Informed by Kotter’s Change Model	Activities Informed by Bridges’ Transition Model	Evaluation Activities
<i>Phase One: Creating a Climate for Change and Welcoming Endings (3-month timeframe)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish sense of urgency among stakeholders via a townhall • Launch kick-off meeting with coalition members • Validate the vision for change via a facilitated session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold drop-in Q&A sessions in preparation for confusion • Establish anonymous feedback mechanisms to provide an emotional outlet 	<p><i>PDSA Cycle One:</i> gather initial data from drop-in sessions, assess levels of early change resistance, modify action and communication if needed</p> <p><i>Impact Program Evaluation: Begin</i> collecting early ranked methods metrics as a pre-test measure, monitor/collate baseline demographic, organization, and correlational metrics</p>
<i>Phase Two: Engaging the Organization and the Neutral Zone (6-month timeframe)</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage all staff memos and intranet site to communicate vision • Incorporate messaging into departmental newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer “what comes next?” via communication channels • Launch debriefs and feedback sessions via department meetings and team huddles to share experiences 	<p><i>PDSA Cycle Two:</i> gather data and information from debrief sessions, assess levels of preparedness in pilot program, modify program supports if needed</p>

Activities Informed by Kotter's Change Model	Activities Informed by Bridges' Transition Model	Evaluation Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch pilot program with first cohort of leaders 		<i>Impact Program Evaluation:</i> Collect ranked methods metrics post-pilot, begin collating initiative focused metrics, and identify relevant correlational metrics to consider in phase three
<i>Phase Three: Sustaining Change and New Beginnings</i> (6-month timeframe)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from pilot to program by integrating into leader onboarding • Embed performance markers and competencies within performance evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain supports for dialogue and question asking via drop-in sessions or scheduled department meetings • Acknowledge consistency at team huddles and/or within department meetings 	<i>PDSA Cycle Three:</i> gather data from drop-in sessions and department meetings, assess integration of behaviours, modify program if needed <i>Impact Program Evaluation:</i> Begin the impact program evaluation, informed by data sets collected throughout the change implementation process

Phase One: Creating a Climate for Change and Welcoming Endings

Step one and two of Kotter's eight step model, establishing a sense of urgency and creating a coalition, are required to support the advancement of change at the organizational level (Kotter, 1995). The call for change is focused on leadership action as leaders will be the target audience for the change intervention and will serve as change agents to develop and support institutional credibility on the change topic (Kotter, 1997). Developing an equity-informed and inclusive leadership practice through inclusive leadership development is a powerful way of combatting systemic inequity and encouraging psychological safety (Ferdman,

2020). Integrating leadership responsibility into the call for change/developing a sense of urgency is critical given the role that leaders have in perpetuating inequity (Ferdman, 2014). This call will be supported by a powerful guiding coalition including executive sponsors, project leaders, change leaders, and change champions. Coalition composition is described in Appendix B. The guiding coalition will be validated by members of the senior management team and members of the equity, diversity, and inclusion council.

Step three of Kotter's model, forming a strategic vision and initiatives, will support leaders in creating a climate for change. Developing a vision for change will provide purpose and structure to this phase. Collaboratively creating a successful change vision that supports and includes a variety of perspectives will allow change coalition members to communicate the vision with sincerity (Wheeler & Holmes, 2017; Whelan-Berry & Somerville, 2010). While a draft vision for change has been defined throughout chapters 1 and 2, at the time of implementation, it will be validated with stakeholders across XX College. The goal and intent are to support and cultivate change buy in through collaboration (Campbell, 2008).

From Bridges' model, phase one begins with an end and acknowledges the emotional transition that change requires (Leybourne, 2016). It is expected that leaders may need time to process emotions that often accompany or partner with transition including sadness, anger, confusion, or uncertainty (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Leybourne, 2016). Phase one will intentionally provide time and spaces for leaders to engage in self-reflection, welcoming the natural tension caused by defining the change gap (Mento et al., 2002). This may require a shift in leader identity. For example, many leaders within XX College identify as belonging to the baby boomer generation and have shared that they were raised and educated to treat everyone the same, treat others how they want to be treated, and/or to not see or acknowledge difference.

Indeed, this is supported in literature, where Lovely (2012) suggests that baby boomers tend to value authority, equalness, and sameness. The confusion that can emerge from a previous way of being, such as shifting the belief that everyone should be treated the same to the idea that experiences have been shaped by socio-political forces designed to advantage some groups and communities is expected to impact how the call for change is framed within XX College.

Saying goodbye to this way of being and allowing time for leaders and administrators within this generation to process will support movement into a neutral zone and is the first phase in preparing for a new way of being and leading. Actions within this phase will be particularly critical. Allowing time and space is important but must be coupled with forward movement. The implementation components of phase one should be respectful of the ending, but not dwell on what is over (Ryzin et al., 2011). To strike the balance between space for emotional processing while also ensuring forward movement, its timing is paired with the beginning of Kotter's model. Coupling this phase with Kotter's first two steps, a call for action and developing a change coalition, will be essential in advancing a leadership development program.

Phase Two: Engaging the Organization and the Neutral Zone

The neutral zone is marked by acceptance of what is ending, and uncertainty, timidity, and discomfort emerge as the change begins to take place (Ryzin et al, 2011). In this new and unfamiliar space, implementation activities will focus on answering "now what", "so what", and "what is in it for me" questions at all levels of leadership (Frost, 2014). To support leaders in transitioning through uncertainty, the implementation actions will include establishing a feedback process for leaders and employees to share their thoughts, perspectives, and experiences with the inclusive leadership development program and/or other change implementation activities (Mento et al., 2002). Holding regular debriefs with leaders and

employees to promote an open dialogue about the change will be critical in advancing feelings of safety within the neutral zone (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). The neutral zone will provide opportunity for leaders to reconceptualize their role in equity initiatives, and ideally through validating the vision for change, feel like co-owners within the overall change process (Campbell, 2008).

Step four within Kotter's model ensures that once the vision has been established, the change vision and mission is shared with those who will implement and participate or be impacted by the change (Small et al., 2016). Specific change communication strategies will be guided by internal communication channels that already exist at XX College. Steps five and six within Kotter's model are where the core change actions take place. As the mid-term goal of this implementation plan is to launch the first iteration of the inclusive leadership development program, it is expected that at this point in the plan, leaders have begun to explore new learnings, engaged in self-reflection, and are ready to begin integrating some of their leadership learnings into their leadership practice.

At step five, leaders should feel encouraged and empowered to begin experimenting and exploring inclusive leadership in a practical way (Opie & Roberts, 2017; Small et al., 2016). Critically, step five actions should truly provide opportunities for participation and the ability to influence, provide feedback, and engage in decision making. Change that is imposed is a significant barrier to team-level psychological safety (Remtulla et al., 2021). As the intended change is to create greater psychologically safe environments across XX College, it would be prudent to consider ways of embedding psychological safety in change implementation planning. Quick wins, covered in step six, can sustain longer implementation goals through participatory

decision-making and ensuring the opportunity to participate and provide feedback to guide future change (Fine, 2017; Su, 2017).

Phase Three: Sustaining Change and New Beginnings

Both steps seven and eight in Kotter's model, using wins to create more change and sustaining or institutionalizing change, requires a cultural shift where the change becomes the way of being (Kotter, 1997; Small et al., 2016). The inclusive leadership development program may become the norm once supplementary functions, such as embedding inclusive leadership markers in performance evaluations and creating policy and institutional systems that bring equity and psychological safety to the forefront, are actioned in supplementary change implementation initiatives. It is within the sustaining change phase that change needs to stick in order to become common practice (Small et al., 2016). Important and critical actions such as utilizing the affinity networks and communities of practice that informed the change coalition to continue change, using the development program to onboard new leaders, and using the performance management process to sustain success will be essential (Offerman & Basford, 2014).

Bridges' model plays a significant role in change implementation in this final phase. After emerging from the neutral phase, administrators, leaders, and participants in the program will enter a stage of new beginnings. In new beginnings, a new way of doing things emerges and becomes integrated into daily practice though this stage is sometimes earmarked by lingering anxiety and/or sliding back into comfortable ways of former being (Ryzin et al, 2011). Actions through the lens of Kotter's model should be supportive in limiting the amount of emotional regression.

Managing Transition: Resistance as Part of Implementation

Chapter 2 explored and discussed both change readiness and change resistance. While change readiness, as per the organizational analysis, appears congruent with XX College's current state, goals, and strategic priorities, surfacing change resistance will be a significant component of the change implementation plan, predominantly underscored in phase one. The deep, longstanding, and concretely established status quo of XX College will challenge the implementation of any change that is intended to advance equity-focused psychologically safe climates (Weiner, 2009). While there are some elements that have been recommended in earlier sections to ease or mitigate change resistance through change planning, such as anticipatory justice and PDSA cycles, this change implementation plan has been crafted to acknowledge, welcome, and invite resistance as a natural part of implementation. After all, would resisting resistance not lead to more resistance?

Resistance is a natural, normal, and expected response to change, especially when it involves moving from the known, such as the status quo, to the unknown, such as the future vision (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Four key reactions or behaviours have been identified within broader change resistance, including initial denial, resistance, gradual exploration, and eventual commitment (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Scott & Jaffe, 1988). Implementation of an inclusive leadership development plan to create a behavioural foundation for leaders to advance equity-focused psychologically safe climates is likely to trigger both denial and active resistance among some leaders and administrators. This is okay. A saying attributed to Peter Senge extends this thought, as he shares that people do not resist change, but rather, resist being changed (Lorenzi & Riley, 2000). Bridges' (2003) acknowledges this, explaining that "it isn't the changes themselves that people in these cases resist. It's the losses and endings that they will experience

and the transitions that they are resisting” (p. 24). This change implementation plan was designed and considered with resistance in mind, with the intent of building actions that acknowledge the discomfort that comes with transition.

Implementation Supports

Implementing an inclusive leadership development program will, undoubtedly, require appropriate resourcing to ensure its success. Weiner (2009) offers three key determinants of change implementation capability including task demands, resource availability, and situational factors. Through this lens, availability of key resources is explored rather than a structural assessment of whether they are needed.

In current state, two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, availability of all resources at XX College have become strained. Primary resources within this change implementation plan would include time, human resources, financial resources, and information resources. Human resources have, in some circumstances, been shared, re-deployed, re-balanced, and/or eliminated. Ongoing fiscal pressures brought on by additional costs and measures required to keep people safe at work, such as testing supplies and protective equipment, have further thinned what may have been a budget surplus.

Access to information, for the purposes of this change initiative, has increased as senior administrators have been acutely aware of tuning in to what College community members are sharing about equity-related initiatives. However, the high volume of information that continues to be shared from various levels of leadership has led to some attention and information fatigue within the broader campus population. Impacts and challenges of these limited resources are explored below.

Implementation Limitations, Challenges, and Potential Issues

A challenge that may emerge as this change is implemented is the impact or effect of organizational change on individual identity within the organization. Organizational culture and cultural norms define who an organization is, and that shared identity leads to consistent and coherent organizational action (Jacobs et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2008). As the new vision for leadership at XX College emerges, informed by equity and psychological safety, the identity of the organization may also change in response. Changes to an organization's identity can be experienced as threats to the individual identities within the organization (Fiol, 2002; Jacobs et al., 2013). While this may be conceptualized as a form of change resistance, it is a particularly pernicious subset, given that it may lead individuals to question their sense of self.

A potential limitation of this implementation plan is the narrowed and intentional focus on stepwise change. While intentional and rational, additional organizational change is needed to ensure the organization can move from new beginnings to a way of being, defined by the change vision. To an extent, this implication is by design, though it warrants acknowledgement. Implementing the leadership development program first is intentional, even though it may be more strongly supported by an EDI strategy. The change implementation plan is designed around a singular solution to ensure manageability and prevent a sense of change overwhelm within the organization.

Summary

The change implementation plan describes the integration of Bridges' model and Kotter's model to advance and implement an inclusive leadership development program. The psychological and emotional transition that Bridges' model acknowledges, and the sequenced process of Kotter's model offer a unique combination of emotional intelligence and structured

process. Given the complex and intersection nature of equity, psychological safety, oppression, marginalization, and inclusive leadership, the implementation plan was designed with change resistance in mind. Actions are crafted to acknowledge the discomfort that comes with transition. This will be beneficial in supporting change process monitoring and evaluation, as described in the following section.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

An extension of the change implementation plan are actions and processes to monitor, measure, and evaluate change. Plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles will be used to monitor the progress of inclusive leadership development to cultivate equity-focused psychological safety, as they are suitable for shorter, iterative change cycles (Taylor et al., 2014). Impact evaluations are used to assess the extent to which a program was effective in achieving its ultimate goals and will be used to evaluate the overall success of the leadership development program (Williams, 2020). Leveraging two distinct approaches to change process monitoring and evaluation is intentional. It will allow for short- and longer-term monitoring and more comprehensive examination of results through intentionally leveraging a mixed methods approach. PDSA cycles will be used to primarily leverage qualitative monitoring results and the impact evaluation will be used to primarily evaluate program success through quantitative metrics.

PDSA cycles are central in quality improvement initiatives and offer key insight into monitoring change implementation activities and processes (Crawfoot & Prasad, 2017; Leis & Shojania, 2017). The systematic approach of PDSA cycles aligns well with the stepwise nature of Kotter's change model, suggesting a complementary intersection between change implementation and monitoring change progress (Amin & Survey, 2018). Marked by four distinct components, PDSA cycles provide a structured and experimental learning approach to

testing changes (Reed & Card, 2016). In Kotter's seminal work, exploring why change transformations often fail within organizations, he noted that risk taking through experimentation, exploring, and trying new ideas, and ensuring that leaders have the skills to succeed are critical to over change success (Kotter, 1995). PDSA cycles integrate nicely into this approach, allowing for both continual improvement and iterative change (Taylor et al., 2014).

In addition to PDSA cycles, an impact evaluation will be used to evaluate the longer-term outcomes and impact of the inclusive leadership development program. Impact evaluations collect and analyze information about a program's activities in order to make judgements about its effectiveness (Strong et al., 2021). Impact evaluations are often participatory processes, fitting well within the context of this problem of practice (Williams, 2020). Specific metrics related to this evaluation will be discussed later in this section.

Applying PDSA Cycles to the Problem of Practice

The change implementation plan for this problem of practice clearly articulates the organizational change activities required to advance an inclusive leadership development program. As acknowledged earlier in the chapter, this development program will be implemented as one way of cultivating equity-focused psychologically safety climates, given the unique roles that leaders have in creating/not creating inclusion, belonging, and psychological safety (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). In the broader context of both XX College and the field of equity and psychological safety, it must be supported by organizational culture and policy. In future change iterations, PDSA cycles should also be applied to policy and system change.

The proposed solution to the problem of practice, implementing an inclusive leadership development program, will impact all leaders at all levels and within all departments/schools

across XX College. PDSA cycles fit with leadership development implementation initiatives given the propensity for learning, change agility, and iterative measurement (Taylor et al., 2014). This approach supports the development of knowledge and learning in team settings, a critical element for the implementation of inclusive leadership practice (Christoff, 2018). As noted, PDSA cycles are an effective change monitoring tool. They are also particularly valuable in minimizing resistance to change (Crowfoot & Prasad, 2017). Given that this problem of practice is expected face change resistance through challenging dominant narratives and power structures, PDSA cycles are an appropriate fit (Crowfoot & Prasad, 2017; Randel et al., 2018).

Some tension is presented in the application of PDSA cycles to broader organizational change, as recommended for this problem of practice. PDSA cycles recommend that each test of change be done on a smaller scale and based on iterative findings and data collected throughout each cycle. After data is collected, then it is recommended to proceed with advancing change or modifying action (Christoff, 2018; Laverentz & Kumm, 2017). To navigate the tension presented by the planned change and PDSA cycles, pilot teams will be used to advance inclusive leadership development. Integrating PDSA cycles into the change implementation plan will be explored from a pilot program perspective. Table 4 describes the connection and relationship between measurement and evaluation approaches.

Table 4

Measurement and Evaluation Approaches and Focus

Area of Consideration	Measurement: PDSA Cycles	Evaluation: Impact Program Evaluation
<i>Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller scale, iterative • Multiple cycles to be integrated across full change implementation plan • Align with steps/phases in Kotter's change model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger, full program evaluation • To begin after the first full pilot cohort of the leadership development program

Area of Consideration	Measurement: PDSA Cycles	Evaluation: Impact Program Evaluation
<i>Focus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive, smaller scale, iterative change throughout the entire change implementation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the success and impact of the inclusive leadership development program
<i>Outputs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily qualitative data and information • Identify the extent by which dialogue and change communication has been deemed effective by participants • Track and monitor change resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five specific metrics, predominantly quantitative • Provide a comprehensive picture of successes and opportunities • Intended to inform future iterations and offerings of the program
<i>Timeline</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 2 months per full PDSA cycle, to start at the beginning of the change implementation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning after the completion of the first pilot program • Expected to take 3 – 6 months to complete

PDSA cycles will allow for a shorter, iterative, and more responsive approach to measuring success while an impact program evaluation will evaluate the success and impact of the inclusive leadership development program. PDSA cycles will be used as an active monitoring strategy where the program impact evaluation will be a more comprehensive evaluation method. This blended approach targets different aspects and timelines of change monitoring and evaluation.

Applying PDSA Cycles to the Change Implementation Plan

By making use of leadership development program pilots, change can be monitored on a smaller scale, more appropriate for the correct application and use of a PDSA cycle. Acknowledging that PDSA cycles are iterative, it is expected that multiple cycles will occur throughout the full change implementation plan (Christoff, 2018). In other words, one PDSA cycle will not successfully cover all eight of the steps within Kotter's change model. Multiple

and continuing PDSA cycles will be required over time. Below is an outline of the first PDSA cycle, capturing the first phase of the change implementation plan.

First PDSA Cycle

Given the iterative nature of PDSA cycles, and their intended application within smaller scale change, the initial PDSA cycle will involve the first two steps of the change implementation plan; the call for change and forming a powerful team (Ogrinc & Shojania, 2013). Within this first cycle, the guiding coalition will begin planning by identifying tasks, task owners, highlighting accountabilities and responsibilities, and outlining intended team outcomes (Christoff, 2018). Additional actions within the planning phase will include identification of opportunities for feedback on the change vision and identifying opportunities for leadership feedback.

Within this cycle, the “do” stage, initial actions within the change implementation plan can begin. Once stakeholders have been assigned as task owners, as determined within the plan stage, the first action step of validating and consulting with union leaders, affinity network leaders, and equity and inclusion council members can begin. Opportunities for participatory action, including participatory decision-making, will be critical to ensuring that members of the guiding coalition feel empowered to act.

Within the study stage, initial data from feedback and participatory decision-making opportunities will be used to assess the advancement within the first two steps of Kotter’s implementation model. The opportunities for leaders to engage in self-reflection, engaging with the discomfort of the transition process, and sitting with the sadness, confusion, and uncertainty that arises from transition will serve as data sources for monitoring this first PDSA cycle (Leybourne, 2016; Mento et al., 2002). Much of the qualitative data collected in this first PDSA

cycle will be needed to prepare for future cycles. The first round of feedback will provide critical insight into initial leadership perceptions and may allow the change implementation team to track and monitor the intensity and pervasiveness of change resistance across the organization.

Leveraging findings from the study stage, the first “act” stage will assess initial organizational response to inclusive leadership and development opportunities at XX College. The levels of change resistance monitored in the study stage will inform problem solving activities or opportunities for improved communication and participation in the change process. It is anticipated that implementing additional feedback processes, advancing a communications plan, and equipping the change coalition with skills to empathize and coach staff who are struggling with the change and transition process.

Change Process Evaluation: Impact Program Evaluation

To measure and evaluate change throughout the change implementation process, five different types of metrics will be leveraged within the structure of an impact program evaluation. As noted earlier in this section, impact evaluations are focused on evaluating the success or impact a program has (Wimbush et al., 2012). While describing a full impact evaluation proposal is outside the scope of this paper, the specific measures that will be used within an impact evaluation framework are described. Specifically, ranked methods, initiative focused, demographic, organization, and correlational metrics will be used. This combination of metrics has been intentionally selected to align with the different facets and elements of inclusion, equity, and psychological safety. Many organizations, including XX College, limit their equity-related monitoring metrics to those that capture representation and include primarily demographic or identity-based characteristics. This is reflected in publicly available institutional EDI plans, often describing the distribution of marginalized identities across leadership

positions. While representation metrics are important, they only provide one piece of a larger, more complex equity puzzle.

Ways of measuring experiences of equity, belonging, and psychological safety are emerging in the literature. Most measurement and evaluation tools rely on self-reporting structures, which employees are not required or obligated to participate in (Edmondson et al., 2016; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Moreover, if organizations only capture information or metrics at one point or through one avenue, data will only reflect voices of those who interact with the organization at that specific point. For example, if an organization only collects demographic metrics upon hire, they may not be able to track the progression, or lack of, of members of equity-deserving communities across leadership opportunities. Robust, meaningful, and aligned metrics that can demonstrate patterns of equity and psychological safety across the employee lifecycle are essential for creating true organizational change, especially when the change aims to shift culture, climate, behaviour, and capacity (Smith, 2020).

Ranked Methods Metrics

Ranked methods metrics are belief statement measures, usually ranked against a Likert-scale with response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Examples of ranked methods metric questions may include “I feel like I belong here”, “I can express my opinion without fear of repercussion”, or “my leader encourages me to share my perspective, even when I do not agree”. These questions are critical to assessing the outcome and success of leadership behaviours, and ideally, would engage members across an organizational community. Ensuring that there are metrics focused on assessing experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of followers may help to avoid or deter leaders from engaging in performative or optical equity and inclusion (Ryan, 2000).

There are limitations of ranked methods metrics within organizations, especially when focused on equity, inclusion, and psychological safety. More research is needed to demonstrate which ranked methods tools effectively measure, evaluate, and assess experiences of inclusion especially among employees who have multiple intersecting social identities (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Monitoring and measuring how followers with different social locations react and respond to inclusive leadership practices, and whether they are experienced as equitable and psychologically safe, will be critical for future change iterations.

Initiative Focused Metrics

Initiative based or initiative focused metrics evaluate progress and program outcomes through quantitative measures (Smith, 2020). These metrics capture numbers-based outcomes such as the percentage of leaders who have completed the program, the number of feedback sessions held to gather and learn from perspectives, or the number of employee resource support networks that exist across the organization. In the context of this change implementation plan, initiative focused metrics will be essential in evaluating the rollout and implementation success of the leadership development program itself.

Demographic Metrics

As described above, demographic metrics are commonly used within broader diversity and inclusion initiative. Within some organizations, these may be described as hiring targets. Often, the goal of demographic metrics is to capture the quantitative breakdown of the different identities and diversity dimensions that exist within an organization (Smith, 2020). These types of metrics are purely identity based, commonly capturing racial, ethnic, disability, gender identity, and more. Within this change evaluation plan, demographic metrics and the distribution of different identities will be used to evaluate the success of inclusive leadership development

within broader human resource processes including recruitment, hiring, retention, and internal promotion. It is expected that this type of metric will support longer term evaluation strategies as observable and measurable change in organizational composition, as a result of inclusive leadership development, will take time (Smith, 2020).

Organization Metrics

Organizational metrics make connections between inclusion and equity activities on broader, strategic organizational goals. Specifically, organizational metrics show the impact of inclusion on organizational goals that are not deemed “inclusion” goals (Smith, 2020).

Organizational metrics will be essential in ensuring ongoing decision-maker buy in to the planned change and change implementation process as it will demonstrate the positive connection between inclusion and psychological safety and other strategic actions within XX College’s business plan. Within XX College, specific measures will be found within the reported annual business plan outcomes and the organization-wide employee engagement survey, an important change evaluation tool to support monitoring organizational metrics that align with this proposed organizational change.

Correlational Metrics

Correlational metrics measure traditional data points within broader human resource functions such as turnover rates, internal promotion to leadership positions, employment status, number and type of human resource related complaints, and grievances related to inclusion and equity topics (Smith, 2020). These metrics can be conceptualized as indirect measures; not specific outcomes of inclusive leadership development, are likely to be impacted over time. Correlational metrics at XX College are captured through the human resource balanced scoreboard. This will be an important data source within the broader impact evaluation.

Responding to Measurement and Evaluation Findings

Ultimately, the goal and intent of the change monitoring and evaluation plan is to be agile and nimble in responding to findings that emerge from the PDSA cycles and impact program evaluation. As change progresses, it is anticipated that the change implementation plan will be modified and adapted in response to quantitative and qualitative findings. The first phase of the change implementation plan, creating a climate for change, is likely to require the guiding coalition to be flexible in aligning change team tasks with the activities that are needed to close the gap between current state and future state. Realistically, within the first three months of the planned change, qualitative findings from PDSA cycles will guide responsive changes within the implementation plan. It could be reasonably expected that modifications to the change team, particularly change agents and change advocates, would be required.

Upon entering the second phase of the change implementation plan, engaging and enabling the whole organization, initial results from early quantitative evaluation results may start to emerge through ongoing feedback mechanisms. Within this state of transition, ranked methods metrics may reveal additional or unplanned barriers to implementation change. Holding frequent and consistent debrief sessions with leaders and employees to validate early qualitative findings and to promote and sustain open dialogue about change will be support high levels of responsiveness to early monitoring and evaluation findings (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Within the third phase of change implementation, implementing and sustaining the change, it is expected that the first leadership development pilot will yield qualitative and qualitative findings that will be relevant for future iterations/cohorts of the program. Data collected within this phase may result in changes in development program content, alter program implementation strategies, and/or yield information that supports ways in which XX College

may shift to support change sustainability. The implementation plan actions to support ongoing change, the eighth step within Kotter's model, are preliminary. It is expected that results from ranked methods, organizational, and correlational metrics may guide additional change.

Summary

This section describes the use of PDSA cycles and impact evaluations to effectively monitor and evaluate the change process. PDSA cycles will allow for a shorter, iterative, and more responsive approach to measuring success while an impact program evaluation will evaluate the success and impact of the inclusive leadership development program. This blended approach targets different aspects and timelines of change monitoring and evaluation. Ideally, this will also support XX College in being agile in responding to findings throughout the change process.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

A comprehensive communication plan to support planned change at XX College is critically important to ensure that key stakeholders feel engaged within the change process. Numerous communication channels will be important in ensuring that all communication related to change initiatives are accessible across the organization. The development of the communications plan is informed by the power cube by Gaventa (2006). While perhaps an unorthodox approach to planning change communications and framing the need for change, this problem of practice requires XX College to move beyond traditional or typical plans, frameworks, or strategies.

Change Communication at XX College

Change communication at XX College is sporadic, uncoordinated, and top-down. Updates from members of the senior team are primarily communicated by email and

there are multiple distribution lists that are used. Distribution lists typically separate recipients by function, including all staff, leadership, all students, and combinations of the three. Communication is often shared as announcements, informing recipients of information and content, but not including them in communication channels. The purpose of most communication across the organization is to advise or inform. Communication is not often positioned as dialogue and opportunities to ask questions are at the discretion of the leader.

Communication regarding equity-related initiatives has been shifting within the last couple of years. The institution has become increasingly mindful of how some messages and communication may be perceived by different groups or communities across the organization. A focus on ensuring that content and communication is considered through an Indigenous perspectives lens has been emerging at the senior management level. Underpinning equity-related communication is a fear of saying or doing something that will be perceived or received as wrong, bad, or harmful. Some leaders exercise extreme caution so as not to be seen or perceived as ignorant in their language and communication. This has made some equity-related changes slow and difficult to implement. Addressing concern, cautiousness, fear, harm, and oppression within the change communication process will be critical.

Building Awareness and Framing Issues with an Equity Lens

To truly weave the concepts and topics discussed throughout this organizational improvement plan, applying an equity lens to change communication and awareness is essential to success. Experiencing, planning, or communicating change from a dominant identity or perspective will do nothing more than perpetuate the status quo (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Hasford, 2016). While change activities will be positioned with the intent of advancing equity and inclusion, a lack of an equity lens on change awareness building often serves as protective

function for those with dominant identities (Randel et al., 2018). If inclusive leadership is a set of behaviours that questions leadership practice with the intent of deconstructing practices that contribute to the marginalization of some groups and communities, change communication and awareness building must also be designed with the goal of breaking down systemic and systematic barriers (Fine, 2017). If not, the positioning of this problem of practice through an inclusive leadership lens is disingenuous at best, and harmful, traumatic, and oppressive at worst.

Building Awareness

An essential component within the change communication plan is building awareness of both the need for change and the change itself. Within XX College, there is some awareness of the need to change though it is coupled with an observed disconnectedness between the need and individual proximity to the need. For example, the College is a signatory on the Indigenous Education Protocol and the Scarborough Charter. Both documents outline equity actions related to incorporating Indigenous perspectives/knowledge and advancing the interests of Black students and faculty. Reception of these documents has been positive, however, language and conversations through the College indicate that there is little awareness of how everyone within the College community is part of upholding these commitments. Common sentiments such as “they should do something about...” or “whoever is responsible for this should...” have been echoed by members across the College. Whether intentional or unintentional, the existing levels of awareness across XX College appear to have created space and distance between individuals and the need for change. The need is recognized, but only when it is external to oneself. Thus, building awareness of the need to change will focus on creating connection and seeing oneself within the change rather than adjacent to it.

Given the current levels of awareness of the need to change, creating connection and supporting members of the XX College community to identify within the need for change will be essential to building meaningful and more purposeful awareness of the need to change. One way of building more tangible awareness of the need to change is by linking change communication to change receptivity (Frahm & Brown, 2007). Change receptivity challenges the assumption that communication is a linear process and embraces a number of responses to change, ranging from negative to positive (Frahm & Brown, 2007). This approach aligns with Bridges' transition model and an equity lens; by building awareness through connection to emotion and self-identification within the need to change, acknowledging that all emotions and responses are welcome.

Building awareness through change receptivity moves from considering employees as targets of change to proactive participants of change (Frahm & Brown, 2007). Building awareness, then, will require a number of actions including leveraging bi-directional communication methods such as town halls to ensure that employees have the opportunity to ask questions. Creating drop-in meetings to create spaces for conversation and awareness building of equity concepts will support dialogue. Within early stages of change planning, as the guiding coalition is established, creating opportunities for expressions of interest to ensure that employees feel ownership and agency over methods of participation, should they wish to be involved in the change. Lack of information and/or misinformation often leads to rumours, gossip, and anxiety, so leveraging these two communication channels to build awareness among employees and leaders will be important in navigating information challenges (Christensen, 2014).

Framing Issues

Social justice conversations and topics continue to emerge within the workplace, including at XX College. The College has encouraged these conversations as a way of moving the College community towards deeper understandings, learnings, and participation within equity related initiatives. Yet, a general welcoming of equity, inclusion, and psychological safety will not necessarily yield the outcomes that the College is hoping to achieve. Successful change implementation outcomes hinge on the nature of the power relations that guide or govern the framing of the awareness and commitment towards a need for change (Gaventa, 2006). Inclusive leadership practice is fundamentally about changing power relationships (Merlini et al., 2016; Morgan, 2017). Thus, a change initiative that aims to reconceptualize how power is positioned and distributed within an organization will require critical reflection and framing.

The very presentation or offering of the word “power” can feel overwhelming and contentious. Those who have power often aim to keep it and those who do not have it often aim to acquire it. Above all, in social systems that intentionally create barriers for marginalized communities, the aim is to maintain and control access to power (Fine, 2017). The barriers and disadvantages created for marginalized populations is often imperceptible to those already in positions of power because access to power, and agency to use it, is part of their normal experience (Bush, 2021). It is important, then, that the communications plan contextualizes and frames these concepts in a way that strategically and sustainably disrupts the status quo (Bush, 2021).

Not a Zero-Sum Game

While a full exploration into the different types and sources of power within organizations, such as legitimate power, coercive power, or expert power, is outside the scope of

this chapter, everyone within organizations possesses and/or is impacted by power (Gaventa, 2006; Lunenberg, 2012). The understanding and relative importance of power seems to be influenced by your proximity to it. Those who may be deemed powerful or have access to power may be hesitant about this leadership change as it effectively encourages the re-distribution of power within XX College (Gaventa, 2006). Often, this leads to zero-sum thinking; to gain or re-distribute power means that others must give some up.

Those with power rarely give it up freely without deeper understanding of the implications of power imbalances, leading to the perception of power struggles (Gaventa, 2006). However, power “is not a finite resource” and it can be shared in many ways (Gaventa, 2006, p. 24). Framing power as an infinite resource within change communications will be essential in tempering resistance and reactions to conversations around power and leadership. Answers and communication in response to anticipatory questions around power and leadership, such as “what am I being asked to give up?” and “why do I have to give up power when others do not?”, will be centered around re-conceptualizing power and power distribution. Leaders will be guided to reflect on their pre-conceived notions and deep-rooted beliefs about power and explore how they might shift out of scarcity thinking patterns.

Levels of Power

As noted by Gaventa (2016), power is often used with key adjectives, typically leading to a positive or negative frame. Historically, power in organizations and among leaders has always been framed as being negative (Lunenberg, 2012). This is true within XX College. Discussions on power and impacts or outcomes of power distribution are rarely held. When conversations or discussions on power do occur, they are often surface level and/or focus on “power over”.

However, power can be re-positioned within the broader organizational climate through change communication.

Communicating and building awareness of the dimensions or levels of power, and the descriptors used in change communication, will be important in reframing how power is conceptualized at XX College. Where “power over” is inherently positioned as a negative use of power, “power with” and “power within” are positive and encouraging reframes on how leaders may use their position and voice to encourage and cultivate a sense of self-identity, confidence, awareness, partnership, and collaboration (Gaventa, 2016). This approach will be reflected within change communication content.

Spaces for Power

As discussed through earlier chapters, institutions and social systems actively and systemically create advantages for some communities and disadvantages for others. Ray (2019) acknowledges that the impact of systemic inequities on organizations, sharing that organizations are not inherently race neutral. While Ray (2019) positions non-neutrality through a racial lens, the approach encompasses all types and form of inequity. In other words, it is not exclusive to racial inequity. Cornwall (2002) notes that spaces for participation are not neutral either; they are shaped by power relations and power distribution within organizations. When framing the need for change, then, it is imperative that XX College recognizes that communication spaces and channels used to build awareness of the change are inherently impacted by power. Those who want to contribute to change planning and change communication are often bound by invisible power boundaries which control who may participate, in what ways, and with what identities (Gaventa, 2006).

While it is possible to hypothesize ways that the need for change and building change awareness could be communicated in ways that circumvent these boundaries, barriers, and structures, it would be disingenuous. The intersection between social systems and power structures is larger than any individual change agent. As a starting point, integrating and building awareness of the systemic barriers that control the distribution of power within participatory processes could be integrated into existing change channels and messaging.

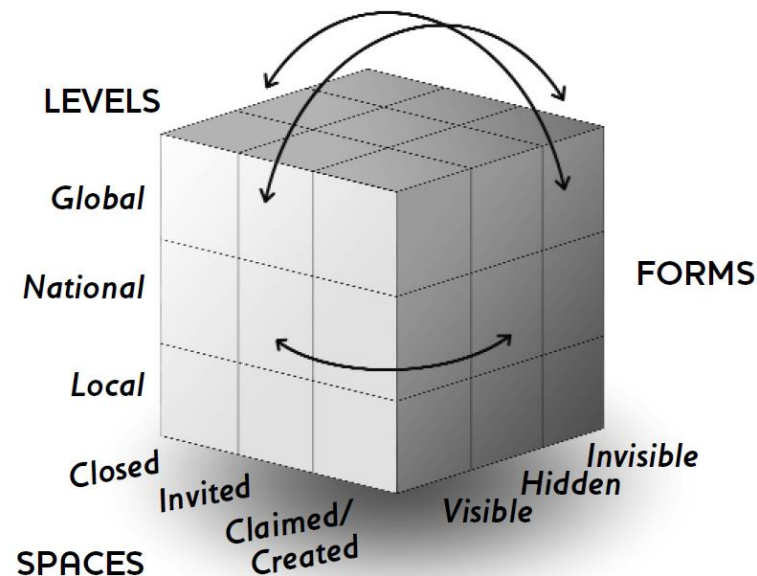
Communication Strategy and Plan: The Power Cube

Having explored and discussed the impact of power on change communication, the power cube will be used to guide the development of the communication strategy and plan. The power cube, developed by Gaventa (2006), is a framework to understand how spaces for engagement and communication are created and “the levels of power in which they occur” (p. 25). Figure 2 visually depicts the elements of the power cube framework.

By using this framework, the possibilities of change communication and action, within an organizational community, can be assessed through a power lens. The organizational community approach to change communication is supported by Elving (2005). Elving (2005) posits that organizational communication strategies that include self-identification and identity building within organizational communication content and channels positively supports the development of social identity in relationship to the proposed organizational change. Given that there is already some awareness of the need to change within XX College, this approach may help to close the gap between awareness and perceived proximity to the problem of practice.

Figure 2

The “Power Cube”: Levels, Spaces, and Forms of Power



Note: The image is from Gaventa, J. (2006). Find the spaces for change: A power analysis. *IDS Bulletin*, 31(6), 23 – 33.

The power cube invites us to consider levels, spaces, and forms of power. This framework will be used to also consider and position knowledge mobilization strategies. The plan to communicate clearly and persuasively to relevant audiences is impacted by power, and thus, appropriate to embed within the communication strategy.

Within the framework, levels of power are described as being global, national, and local and are distinct from the levels of power discussed within the framing section above. For the purposes of the communication plan and path, the forms and spaces of power will be used to develop the path of change and communication milestones. Table 5 describes the forms and spaces as well as proposed communication activities.

Table 5*Power and Change Communication Activities*

Forms of Power	Communicating the Path of Change: Activities
<p><i>Visible Power</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observable decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing and familiar communication channels within XX College including all staff emails/memos and town halls
<p><i>Hidden Power</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling what is important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center and legitimize non-senior management team voices in communication content and channels • Incorporate voices and perspectives from members of the equity, diversity, and inclusion council as well as the guiding coalition • Communication content will invite members of the College community to participate in the change process
<p><i>Invisible Power</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping what is acceptable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on team and departmental communication channels to communicate the path of change • Build social culture through team-level communications to advance change awareness
Spaces of Power	Communicating Milestones and Wins: Activities
<p><i>Closed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where exercising power happens behind closed doors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and share milestones outside of senior management team conversations • Build awareness through participation, allowing change participants to co-define change “wins”
<p><i>Invited</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts are made to bring others into decision making and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform closed spaces into invited spaces, especially when and where decisions related to the change process are being made • Cultivate greater transparency of the change process through regular and consistent communication through established communication channels • Co-design new communication channels to better support the needs of change participants
<p><i>Claimed/Created</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomously created spaces by those who are not included within closed spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support employee resource groups and union networks within the change process • Legitimize voices within claimed/created spaces by ensuring that they are involved in disseminating change messages • Leverage employee resource group and equity, diversity, and inclusion council membership to celebrate wins and sustain change momentum

Forms of Power: Communicating the Path of Change

Forms of power, including visible, hidden, and invisible, are the dynamics that shape broader organizational participation in change. Shaping participation occurs through influencing and controlling the extent by which the voices of change leaders, agents, actors, and participants are visible in the spaces where change is occurring (Gaventa, 2006). Indeed, change is influenced by individual perceptions of how information is shared and who controls the act of sharing (van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). To communicate the change path in a way that brings these forms of power to the forefront will allow for a “more pluralist approach to power” (Gaventa, 2006, p. 27).

Visible power is the ways in which decision making is observed or visible; the rules, structures, and procedures of communicating and decision-making (Gaventa, 2006). This includes answering basic elements of who is communicating, what is being communicated, and how it is being communicated. Formal structures within XX College often rely on communication from the senior management team to set the parameters or expectations for participation within the change process. This does hold some value; setting clear expectations and communicating them to the broader organization is important when socializing and normalizing a shift in culture, leadership practice, and ways of being. To communicate the path of change, at this level of power, communications will be inviting and encourage participation within the upcoming change process.

Hidden power is the ways in which the agenda for change is determined; controlling who decides what is important and how that is communicated outward (Gaventa, 2006). Hidden power often “exclude[s] and devalue[s] the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups” (Gaventa, 2006, p. 29). Critically, then, once the structural components of the

communication plan are established, empowering advocacy and movement throughout the organization will be essential in supporting equitable communication. This will involve legitimizing issues and voices of employees who are not senior management team members and putting non-administrator voices at the forefront of communication strategies.

Invisible power is the most difficult to articulate and has the greatest potential to negatively impact of jeopardize the success of organizational change within this problem of practice. Invisible power sets the tone for how people are expected to think and respond to change. It is the ability to perpetuate acceptance of the status quo, a critical component of communication planning given that the proposed solution aims to challenge and disrupt the status quo. Invisible power perpetuates “exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable, and safe” (Gaventa, 2006, p. 29). This poses both a challenge and an opportunity. Invisible power could be positively leveraged to transform perceptions of what is status quo. Communicating change through the lens of invisible power will be focused on strategies that target social culture (Gaventa, 2006). At XX College, social culture tends to be most prominent or obvious at the departmental level. Communication strategies, then, will focus on communicating important details through team and department communication channels such as huddles, team meetings, and department newsletters/memos.

Spaces of Power: Communicating Milestones and Wins

As discussed, spaces for participation within change and communication are not neutral. Spaces and systems create active barriers that control who may enter into a space and what pieces of themselves are welcome/not welcome. Within the power cube framework, spaces of power interrogate these boundaries. Meaningful communication is not just shaping participation in change, it is defining the right to shape knowledge spaces (Gaventa, 2006). Spaces of power,

then, have implications on how milestones are acknowledged and how knowledge is mobilization within XX College.

Closed spaces are legitimized by decision makers who operate out of sight and/or behind closed doors (Gaventa, 2006). At XX College, when senior management/administrators hide decision making under the auspices of sensitivity or confidentiality, the ability to mobilize and translate knowledge for other participants within the change process is challenged. To challenge closed spaces, establishing and communicate milestones and building awareness of the change path will be done outside of spaces “owned” by the senior team. Where possible, closed spaces will be transformed into invited spaces. Invited spaces are ones where members of the broader organization are invited to participate by those with decision-making authority (Gaventa, 2006). While the ability to invite is inherently an act of power, this will be supported by actions that challenge hidden and invisible power. Claimed or created spaces will be the most important for mobilizing knowledge. Claimed spaces are created by people who have less inherent power, but mobilize around a shared identity, cause, or purpose (Gaventa, 2006). Supporting claimed spaces and encouraging involvement within the change process will support the active legitimization of their voices as knowledge, impacting the dissemination of change communication across XX College.

Summary

A plan to communicate the need for change has been described and discussed using Gaventa’s (2006) power cube. Building awareness, framing issues, realizing that equity is not a zero-sum game, and reflecting on levels of, and spaces for, power are all critical components of the approach to change communication. The invisibility of some power structures, particularly

some forms of power, have highlighted the ways in which XX College can more equitably approach communication, discussion, and decision-making spaces.

Next Steps and Future Considerations of the Organization Improvement Plan

As described in chapter two, the proposed solution of an inclusive leadership development program is positioned alongside other change initiatives. Next steps with XX College, after the inclusive leadership program is fully implemented and evaluated, would be to explore and plan to implement other change options. Developing strategy and policy, reviewing human resource practices with an equity lens, and continuing to challenge the status quo are all critically important actions that will continue to advance the problem of practice. The leadership development program is the first of many change initiatives to support creating equity-focused psychologically safe climates. The complex and multi-faceted nature of both equity and psychological safety requires ongoing work and commitment, both at the leadership level and beyond.

In the short term, the change process will pivot inclusive leadership development from pilot to program. The change implementation plan proposed within this organizational improvement plan is to support the launch of an inclusive leadership development program. Once evaluation activities have taken place, future change actions should be centered on ensuring momentum and sustainability of the development program within XX College. This will be a new exercise for XX College. No leadership development programs have existed beyond a small pilot with a limited number of leaders. Focusing future change actions on embedding change beyond initial implementation activities will be important in ensuring the sustainability and longevity of this work.

Inclusive leadership practice is only one way of supporting and cultivating equity-focused psychologically safe climates. Future considerations for XX College include advancing equity-focused psychological safety through other lenses. While a leadership lens is a powerful and useful starting place, additional lenses that are likely to be beneficial include an environmental lens, structural/operational lens, and educational lens. These additional lenses are likely to yield additional areas of opportunity for XX College to focus and center action on non-leadership elements of equity-focused psychological safety. As research continues to advance our understanding of psychological safety, additional considerations are likely to emerge within the literature in the coming years.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

This problem of practice focuses on identifying and planning for strategies that will be supportive in cultivating equity-focused psychologically safe climates. Chapter 3 proposes a change implementation plan that acknowledges the emotional and psychological components of change as well as the process and systemic or structural components of change by leveraging both Bridges' transition model and Kotter's eight step model. PDSA cycles and a program impact evaluation have been proposed to measure, monitor, and evaluate change. These two approaches are integrated to account for different levels of responsiveness and agility required within the change process. Finally, Gaventa's (2006) power cube is used to outline communication needs with an equity lens. The chapter concludes with a review of next steps and future considerations.

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Appendix A: Components of the Inclusive Leadership Development Program

The inclusive leadership development program will, ideally, be co-developed and informed by other leaders and change agents across the organization. At a minimum, the leadership development program will contain three important components including self-reflective practice, knowledge, ability, and skill development, and coaching and mentoring. The combination of these elements allows for emotional and psychological processing of change, the opportunity to develop leadership skills and abilities via traditional learning methods, and opportunities to be guided in supportive ways through coaching and mentoring.



Appendix B: Change Implementation Plan

	Establishing a Sense of Urgency	Creating a Guiding Coalition	Forming a Vision for Change	Communicate the Vision for Change	Empowering Employees to Act	Generate Short-Term Wins	Using Wins to Create More Change	Sustaining and Anchoring the Change
Change Activities: Kotter's Eight Step Model	<p>Burning Platform: Developing an inclusive leadership practice through formal inclusive leadership coaching and development is a powerful and practical way of combatting systemic inequity in the workplace (Ferdman, 2020). Integrating an inclusive leadership model addresses the most critical component of this problem of practice; the role that leaders have in perpetuating inequity (Ferdman, 2014).</p> <p>Change Target: All leaders in the organization, formal and informal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP, Human Resources (Change Sponsor) Director, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Organizational Development (Change Leader) Diversity and Inclusion Champions (Change Agents) Local Union and Affinity Network Leaders (Change Advocates) Manager, Accessibility (Change Advocate) Change Specialist (Change Consultant) 	<p>Compelling Future Vision: Leaders and employees will be able to modify their leadership practice to encompass and reflect these behaviours, and continually challenge systemic barriers and obstacles that contribute to experiences of systemic inequity. Leaders will be equipped with the skills and abilities to challenge, acknowledge, and act on observations and experiences of inequity in the moment (Ferdman, 2020).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager and Directors Inclusive Leadership Education: Using the inclusive leadership development and coaching program, begin by educating people managers/leaders (Randel et al., 2018). Inclusive Leadership Education and Empowerment: Use the Diversity Champions to educate others on the key topics include inequity, racism, discrimination, and oppression. Client Education on Inclusion and Equity: Create a sustainable way to educate clients on inclusion and equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Strategy: Educate leaders and staff on the utility of the inclusive leadership as a tool for combating systemic workplace inequity Co-Design Strategy: Have staff with marginalized identities identify meaningful experiences and interventions that influence inclusive leadership domains and that are specific to each department (Opie & Roberts, 2017). Performance Analysis: Conduct a second performance analysis with leaders to identify barriers to completing the inclusive leadership development program. Customized Action Plans: Create an implementation plan for leadership level (i.e., manager, director, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an ownership, governance, and accountability structure to operationalize inclusive leadership coaching and development as an essential/mandatory tool. Inclusive leadership embedded in daily practice as a way to monitor leadership performance and organizational key performance indicators (Ross, 1996). Sustain positive change movement through participatory decision-making and ensuring opportunity to participate (Su, 2017; Fine, 2017). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the affinity networks and diversity champions as Change Agents to sustain the change. Use the performance management process to have staff formulate goals about using and understanding inclusive leadership at every level of the organization. Adapt inclusive leadership competencies, as defined within the coaching and development program, within the organizational culture model to align with each functional work level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the inclusive leadership development program, train formal and informal leaders to educate new staff and leaders on the importance and impact of inclusive leadership practice as a tool for combatting systemic workplace inequity. Implement a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle to monitor inclusive leadership development program completion Use the performance management process to sustain success (Offerman & Basford, 2014).
Change Activities: Bridges' Transition Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a performance analysis using the local Union and affinity network leaders to gain deeper understanding of barriers to inclusive leadership within the current leader population. Investigate the gap between current state and future state by telling the truth about where the College is now and welcoming the natural tension caused by defining the gap (Mento et al., 2002). Develop change implementation activities and education about the value, importance, and impact of inclusive leadership based on the results of the organizational analysis (Lunenberg, 2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer the “now what”, “so what”, and “what is in it for me” questions at all levels of leadership, particularly key decision makers who will approve this plan (Frost, 2014). Create a communications plan to support the inclusive leadership coaching and development change management plan. Implement a feedback process for leaders and employees to share about their experiences with the inclusive leadership development program and/or other change implementation activities (Mento et al., 2002). Document the change process with early adopter departments/members of the pilot program to use as a case study for rolling out the change organization-wide (Lunenberg, 2010). Equip leaders with skills to empathize with staff who express positive or negative feedback about the change implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold regular debriefs with leaders and employees to promote an open dialogue about the change (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Equip formal and informal leaders with departments to serve as Change Agents to monitor reactions to change and communicate with the Change Team. Monitor the feedback process that was established and address leader and/or staff concerns promptly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share stories of leader reflection and development with their direct teams to share in the learning experience (Mento et al., 2002). Share success stories from staff about impact of inclusive leadership on experiences of workplace inclusion. Share any indicator improvements organization wide. Disseminate results of KPI and metric changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Evaluation: Did we do everything we planned to do? What were the contextual factors that influenced how we provided the inclusive leadership development program? What were the barriers and facilitators to implementation? Embedding metrics: Post-then-Pre evaluation to measure the effectiveness of coaching and development program to influence leader and employee knowledge. Goal: Increase in the inclusion and engagement score among teams whose leaders engaged in the coaching and development program. 			